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Catholick-Unity
AND
Church-Communion:
OR THE
Chriſtians Duty
To Communicate conſtantly with the
CHURCH of *England*;
With a juſt REPROOF
Of ſeveral Novel and Schiſmatical
Notions and Practices,
Particularly that of
Occaſional Conformity;
Clearly ſtated and proved by way of
Queſtion and Anſwer.

Suited to the well-meaning Country-man's Capacity.

PSALM 87. 2. *The Lord loveth the Gates of* Sion *more than all the Dwellings of* Jacob.

By *JOSEPH BRIGGS*, Vicar of *Kirkburton* in the County of York.

LONDON, Printed by J. H. for Philip Monckton, at the *Star* in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, 1704.

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TO THE

Moſt Reverend Father in God

JOHN,

By Divine Providence,

L^d. Arch-biſhop of *York*,

Primate of *England*,

And Metropolitan,

One of Her Majeſty's Moſt Honourable Privy-Council, *&c.*

May it pleaſe your Grace,

I *Have received with Great Pleaſure the notice of ſeveral Poſitions aſſerted by Our Honourable Patriots in the late Conferences of the Great Senate of* this Kingdom, which I take

happily to advance you in ſo high
tion, to the general Satisfaction
good Men, who all (I am conf
will heartily joyn in the moſt
thankfulneſs to God for ſo faith
Paſtor's being ſet over us in this
vince, and the moſt fervent Praye
Your Grace's perfect Health an
Life, to His Glory, and Our gre
nefit, With

May it pleaſe Your Grace,

Your moſt humble, and

Moſt dutiful Serv

JOSEPH BRI

THE
PREFACE.

IT is agreed by Proteſtants of all Perſuaſions, That in three caſes Separation from an Eſtabliſhed Church is not only no Sin, but even a Chriſtians Duty, and that in theſe caſes the guilt of Schiſm is not theirs who are forced to ſeparate, unleſs they will make Shipwrack of Faith and a good Conſcience; but theirs, who by impoſing ſinful Terms of Communion put a neceſſity upon godly Men to ſeparate: This holds good,

1. In caſe of an Eſtabliſhment of Idolatrous Worſhip, ſuch as that of *Nebuchadnezzar's commanding all Men to fall down before, and to worſhip the golden Image which he had ſet up*: For as it is in *Hoſea* *, *Though* Iſrael *play the Harlot, yet let not* Judah *tranſgreſs, and come not thou to* Gilgal, *neither go up to* Beth-aven.

* Hoſea 4. 15.

2. In caſe of Hereſie or falſe Doctrine and Heretical, impoſed upon Mens Faith: ſuch (for example) as that of *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, † ſaying, *The Reſurrection is paſt already, overthrowing the Faith of the Reſurrection to come.*

† 2 Tim. 2. 17, 18.

3. In caſe of Tyranny, uſurping Domir over Mens Conſciences by making new Arti of Faith, or impoſing any thing really ſinful, things indifferent, as if they were intrinſec neceſſary to, or meritorious of Salvation.

Theſe were the true and juſt Reaſons of and other Reformed Churches renouncing Church of *Rome's* Communion, and proteſt againſt her moſt groſs Errors, Idolatries ; Superſtitions; and (bleſſed be God) from th were we in this Kingdom happily delivered b regular, as it was a Glorious Reformation. N let but our Separatiſts prove that the Churcl *England* (thus reformed) is really guilty of ; of theſe, or impoſeth any ſinful Terms or C ditions of holding her Communion upon ; that couch within her Pale, and we will only approve and allow of their Separation, alſo take the ſhame of the grievous Sin of Sch to the Eſtabliſhed Church, and to our ſelv who are her profeſſed Miniſters and Memb But there have been publiſhed from tim time innumerable good Books by our pai and Learned Clergy, ſufficiently qualified convince all that are ingenuous, unprejud and teachable, that no ſuch Cauſe can be alle ed to juſtify that Separation which hath b made by the policy of the ſower of Tares in Church. And it is lamentable to behold, h many well-meaning People are led into a ſt therein by mere Prejudice, or by a bad Edu tion, or by too high an eſteem of the ſeparat Teachers or their Followers as very godly M and in no wiſe by the Divine Authority of

Holy Scriptures or any ſound Reaſons grounded upon the Scriptures, unto which they ſhould (like good Proteſtants) bear the greateſt Reverence as the true Rule of Truth and Righteouſneſs.

Now, How is it poſſible for any faithful Miniſter (ſeriouſly careful to ſave himſelf and them that hear him) to ſee his beloved People by this means diſperſed, and daily wandring out of his Sheepfold, and be unconcerned? Apparent Schiſm is no ſuch light Matter, no ſuch venial Sin, that he can daily obſerve Men, ſome through groſs ignorance, and others in wantonneſs, having itching Ears, running head-long into it, and he all the time lay his hand upon his mouth, neither ſaying nor doing any thing, either towards the reducing of Strays, or preventing others from following them in ſo pernicious a courſe, who are hitherto in the Church's Communion.

It may peradventure be ſaid, to excuſe a good Miniſters ſad reſenting of this, that the People may (if they pleaſe) buy and read ſuch excellent ſhort Diſcourſes of ſmall price, as have been ſet forth of late years by the *London* Divines for their better Information; and this is true, and whoſoever is tender of his Soul will do this, and ſpare no coſt, and not thruſt himſelf blindfold into ſo great a Sin as Schiſm and Separation; and without doubt, whoſoever doth this raſhly, and wilfully goes on in it, without making uſe of thoſe great Helps of knowing his duty to God and his Church, which God hath graciouſly provided for the People of this Kingdom, he will be without excuſe: ſtill it is apparent, that not one of a thou-

a thouſand doth it, no nor can by any Art be induced to it, nay nor will ſo much as read a Diſcourſe of that nature, if it be put into his hands, and how plain ſoever the Precepts of Unity with God's Church in Scripture be, and particularly (to name no more) that of St. *Paul* to the *Epheſian* Chriſtians, * *to endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace:* And how plain ſoever the cautions of not following Diviſions in Scripture be, particularly (to name no more) that to the Chriſtians in *Rome* †, to *mark them that cauſe Diviſions* and to avoid them; yet do the generality of common People flock to Separate Meetings in a moſt wilful heady way, without taking any due courſe to inform themſelves better, either what is their unqueſtioned Duty or what will be their Sin or Danger.

* Eph. 4. 3.

† Rom. 16. 17.

If then it be further ſaid in a good Miniſters behalf, that he for his part hath not been dumb, he hath freely and faithfully warned his People of all theſe, and having delivered his own Soul, their Blood will be upon their own Heads. This alſo may be very true, and yet one thing may in reaſon put him upon other methods of ſaving their Souls, if poſſible, *viz.* in all probability, the Perſons that ſtood in moſt need of the Medicine provided by their Spiritual Phyſician, did not ſo much as taſt it; they were then a wandring to the Conventicle, when he endeavoured their Conviction in the Church, ſo that he ſpent his ſtrength in vain; all his care and labour was loſt as to them.

But

But if it be ſaid moreover, That he alſo made tryal of reducing ſome in private. If he did ſo, (I anſwer) his Work and Reward is with the Lord, though *Iſrael* would not be gathered; and yet he cannot but in tenderneſs to precious Souls reſent it with grief to find any ſo inflexible and even ſettled upon the lees of Separation, that they either turned a deaf Ear to his moſt charming Exhortations, peremptorily (perhaps) telling him to reſt himſelf, they were reſolved; or they ſpurned at the very naming of Schiſm, or made a Ridicule thereof; or if at all affected therewith, had recourſe to the Intruder, and his Words were to them Oracles, and all he ſaid as good as Goſpel. Much of all this may be the Author's caſe, and in fine, after all attempts of this nature, How often hath he received ſuch a repulſe as this? I am not able to talk with you, the Teachers we go to are godly Men, and they aſſure us we are in no Schiſm, and they are able to defend the thing to your face; or ſay what you will, I cannot believe ſuch godly Men are deceived, or will deceive us.

Now this may deſerve a ſhort Animadverſion; and this I ſay, It is no new thing for theſe Teachers to flatter, and even to canonize their Followers as the only godly People, and for their Followers to requite the Teachers with a loud applauſe as the moſt godly Miniſters, both of them taking their meaſures merely by being of this or that Opinion or Party; and of this we have a freſh and daily experience, little more being ſaid by the Vulgar in their own defence, when reproved for going to Separate Meetings, than

than this amounts to. Oh, if Separation were great a Sin, as you for your own intereſt repreſent it, ſo many godly Miniſters would not chuſe live and die in it as they do. Now is any underſtanding Perſon in good earneſt careful of his Salvation when he reſts it on ſo broken a Reed That Separation without ſuch a cauſe as I have mentioned is a great Sin, will be evident (I hope) in this following Diſcourſe; and if a Sin, will any rational Man think it at all leſs ſinful for any number of Mens (whatſoever they be, or what Sheep's clothing ſoever of ſeeming godlineſs they appear in) living or dying in it? Nor will it be any offence (I hope) to tell the common People how eaſily they may miſtake in their admiring ſome (whether Sectmaſters or their Followers) for godly Men; true godlineſs being really another thing than many judge it. There is often a form of godlineſs without the power thereof, all is not Gold that gliſters, and I ſuppoſe it will be very difficult to name any Author of Schiſm in the Church that did not make a great ſhow of Piety; to be ſure Schiſm and Separation can be no part of true godlineſs.

But if this be thought too invidious a ſuggeſtion, I hope yet, I may without blame direct them who ſteer by the Authority or Example of Men whom they ſo repute, to have thoſe in their Eyes rather whoſe real godlineſs the Separatiſts themſelves will acknowledge without heſitancy; and then I would mind them of the Noble Army of our Proteſtant Martyrs, *Cranmer*, *Ridley*, *Hooper*, *Bradford*, *Taylor*, and the reſt, and from them we receive our Church by

an

an apparent Succeſſion, as it is at this day without any alteration ſave for the better, who alſo had the ſame Ordination and Call to the Miniſtry as we at this day have, and who lived and died in the ſame Places and Dignities as are now in our Church's Conſtitution; nay even ſealed the ſame Religion that we profeſs with their Blood, and who is he that will doubt their moſt eminent Piety, who reformed and ſettled the Church of *England* in its whole frame as it is?

Nor will there be many that will queſtion the godlineſs of thoſe Learned Divines in the Reformed Churches abroad, who have on all occaſions given moſt honourable Teſtimonies of the Eſtabliſhed Church as moſt ſound and orthodox *, ſeverely cenſuring all Separation from it, who alſo in all their Churches obſerve, uſe and enjoyn the ſame or equivalent Ceremonies, Rules and Cuſtoms in their Worſhip and Government, as the Diſſenters quarrel with in ours, to all whom I need not fear to leave the very Flower of our Separate Miniſters in a Claſs, much inferiour for either Learning or Godlineſs; and it is a very reaſonable Queſtion, Whether ſuch great

* Calvin's *Inſtit.* l. 4. c. 1. n. 9. *and* Sect. 10, 12, 13. Beza Ep. 24. p. 128. Cauſabon's *Epiſtle to K.* James. Grotius *ad Boat-ſlaer.* Ep. 61. Lud. Capellus's *Harmony of Confeſſions*: *And in Dr.* Stillingfleet's *Miſchief of Separation. Monſieurs* L'Moyne's, Claude's, Daille's *Letters, with Mr.* Durel's *Reform'd Church's Worſhip and Government.*

great Divines as theſe, with abundance more, be more likely to be deceived than the diſſenting Teachers, educated (moſt of them) in a Non-conformiſt, new-ſet-up Academy, ſent out thence as able enough for the great Work of the Miniſtry in a Conventicle, in much leſs time than is required for commencing Graduates in either of our famous Univerſities; and methinks it ſhould very much abate of the Peoples eſteem of the Authority or Infallibility of the moſt eminent Diſſenters at this day, when they conſider of their ſcandalous Apoſtacy from the Principles and Practices of the moſt learned, ſober and godly amongſt the Non-conformiſts before them, who never denied the Church of *England*'s being a true Church, and always pronounced Separation from a true and orthodox Church to be a Sin, wilful, dangerous and damnable. I may even inſtance in a whole Body of them together, *viz.* the Aſſembly of Divines at *Weſtminſter*, *A. D.* 1648. in their Annotations and Confeſſion of Faith and Prayers of Accommodation to the Independents; and if I muſt name particular famous Men of that perſuaſion, I know there are few bookiſh Separatiſts, who can hear of *Perkins*, *Preſton*, *Dod*, *Hilderſham*, *Ball* or *Edwards*, with divers others, without pleaſure, all which continued in this Church's Communion in their times, notwithſtanding ſome ſcruples and diſſatisfiedneſs, deſiring and endeavouring a further Reformation thereof, who alſo proteſted, preached and printed with the greateſt zeal againſt Separation and Separate Meetings as a deteſtable Schiſm: And were none of theſe truly godly? Indeed

deed, to be ſure, much to be preferred before any of them, who have now broken out into that open Separation which theſe their fore-fathers abhorred.

But further I need not go than them of the preſent Age,* and amongſt them I know Mr. *Baxter's* Books are in divers Country-mens hands, wherein is abundantly ſufficient (what a pity it is that he was moſtwhat inconſiſtent with himſelf) to juſtify the Church of *England* as a good and ſound Church; and, (to mention no more) it will be a wonder if any that attends and underſtands what he reads in his *Poor-mans Family-book*, in his *Cure of Church-Diviſions*, and in his *Defence of the Cure*, and at all values his Authority, can think it ſafe for him to forſake his Pariſh Church for a Conventicle: All which yet I intend for no more than an Argument to ſuch unthinking Perſons as go to Separate Meetings out of an high Opinion of the great godlineſs of the Teachers there, and their Followers.

* *See Mr.* Aſhdon's *Toleration diſapproved by* 20 *Presbyterian Divines*; *and Mr.* Bennet's *late Book of* Schiſm, *wherein he proves the ſinfulneſs of* Separation *by* 80 *of them within theſe* 6 *or* 7 *years laſt paſt, with variety of their Authors*, pag. ult.

But I have a much more noble Deſign in this Diſcourſe than this, which is to inform Mens Judgments in the true reaſon of the thing: and this I have with God's gracious aſſiſtance endeavoured by Anſwers proper to ſeveral gradual

Que-

Queſtions collected out of one of the late *London* Pieces, intituled (*A Reſolution of ſome Caſes of Conſcience which reſpect Church-communion*, printed 1683) with many proper and profitable Additions and Improvements, in a method adapted to any ordinary Capacity. At firſt I only deſigned to diſperſe ſome Copies in my own Pariſh, but finding the tranſcribing them would be an intolerable fatigue, I thought good to procure an Impreſſion, that (if it be poſſible) all may have the benefit of the Antidote that are not in love with the Poiſon: And if any Pariſhioner of mine, or if any other precious Soul reap any ſaving benefit by this my care and pains, it ſhall be my Joy and my Crown, but let God have all the Glory.

POSTSCRIPT.

IF the Reader will pleaſe to read the Contents in the latter end, there he may ſee the whole draught of this Diſcourſe at one view, which will be to him very profitable, and give him better ſatisfaction in the Diſcourſe it ſelf when he peruſeth it.

Catho-

Catholick Unity,

AND

Church-Communion,

Explained by way of

Queſtion and *Anſwer.*

Queſtion I. WHAT is a Church?

Anſwer. A Church is commonly defined to be the Company or Society of the Faithful, and, according to the Notation of the Greek word, *of called ones*, ſuch as are called from the Reſt of the World to Faith and Repentance by the Goſpel. All ſuch called ones are incorporated into a Holy Society by a Divine Covenant that unites them to God, and to one another, ſo as to become a

peculiar People unto God: A Body, and but on Body; and the Union of a Body ſuppoſeth a Union of all its Parts and Members; and tha Union being an Union of that People unto Go whereby they become the Church of God. I is God alone that can eſtabliſh a Covenant fo founding his own Church, even as it is the Pre rogative of the King to grant a Charter to an civil Society or Corporation of Men in his King dom. And ſuch a Covenant did Almighty Go make with *Abraham*, whereby he and his Poſte rity became his Church, and a peculiar Peopl unto him under the Old Teſtament; and ſuc a Covenant, even a new Covenant hath Go alone made with all Mankind, in and by Jeſu Chriſt, ratified by his Blood, who is therefor ſaid to be a *Mediator of a bette* * Heb. 8. 6. *Covenant, founded upon better Pro miſes* *, and from thence it i called the Chriſtian Church. Now this bein well conſidered, will make the Anſwer to th next Queſtion very eaſie.

Queſt. II. What is it to be a Member o the Chriſtian Church?

Anſ. To be taken into covenant with God and to be received into the Church of Chriſt and to become a Member thereof, is one an the ſame thing: For a Man becomes a Membe of the Church of Chriſt, by being admitted in to the Covenant, and on the contrary, no Ma can be a Member thereof viſibly, that is no viſibly admitted into the Covenant. But wh

Number of Men ſoever they be, that are ſo admitted into the Covenant, they are all to be conſidered of, and they are to look upon themſelves in more than their private Capacities, even as Church-members united to God, and to one another in a regular Church-ſociety, even into one Body.

Queſt. III. How, or when, are Men thus viſibly received into covenant with God, ſo as thereby to be made Members of the Church of God?

Anſ. It is done in and by their Baptiſm, for Baptiſm is a Seal of the new Covenant to us Chriſtians, even as Circumciſion was given by God to *Abraham*, to be a Sign and Seal of the Covenant betwixt him and his Seed, even *of the Righteouſneſs of the Faith which he had when he was yet uncircumciſed* *. For Baptiſm ſucceeds Circumciſion under this very Notion as a Seal of the Covenant †. And as Circumciſion was the only Rite and Form ordained by God for admitting Men into Covenant, and into his Church under the Diſpenſation of the Old Teſtament, ſo is Baptiſm the only Rite and Form inſtituted by Jeſus Chriſt, for admitting Men into covenant with God, and into his Church under the Goſpel; and therefore he at his Aſcenſion into Heaven, ordained and authorized a particular Order of Men to receive Men into his Church upon Co-

* Rom. 4. 11.

† Col. 2. 12.

venant-terms, and Condi
* Matt. 28. 19, 20. *Compared with* 1 Pet. 3. 21. baptizing them,*. There ceſſity for all Perſons taki notice of theſe Inſtructi ſetting their Judgments the Notion of a Church their Church-membership;

it is not a being admitted into the Divir nant by Baptiſm, that will ſerve Men's make them Church-members, if they mind to be Independents, unleſs they enter into a particular Covenant with pendent Paſtor or Miniſter. So that, the Church of Chriſt conſiſts of Perſo zed, and is founded on a Divine Coven which they are admitted in their Bapt Independent Churches are founded on a Covenant, a particular Covenant made or that Independent Miniſter, and withou into ſuch a Covenant no Man is a Me Chriſt's Church with them, altho' he be b which is in effect to make Men no C unleſs they will be Independents; b means they gather here a Church and Church, conſiſting of ſuch as will en covenant with them, out of many P Churches, and thoſe perhaps at a great D and whereas Baptiſm ſeparates Chriſtia from them that are no Chriſtians, by this Invention of another particular Church-c the Independent Paſtors ſeparate Chriſtia other Chriſtians in Pariſhes and Towns, very Families. For which the Presb before the late Indulgences, and Tolerat

proved them very ſharply, but have now clearly fallen in with them in the matter of gathering Churches and Separation, though not yet in the Method of putting People to enter into particular Covenant with them, ſo far as we know.

Now it is very eaſie to ſhew what a mere human Invention, having no foundation in the Scriptures, this is: For there is no other account in them of the Apoſtles manner of forming and gathering the Chriſtian Church, or Churches, out of Jews and Gentiles, whereever they came, but by baptizing them, whom they converted to the Chriſtian Faith. There was 3000 Souls converted by St. *Peter*'s Sermon after the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt; and they *receiving the word gladly, were immediately baptized, unto whom as a Church were daily added ſuch as ſhould be ſaved* *; where it is very plain that they were imbodied, as it were, into a Church-ſociety by Baptiſm, without any the leaſt Intimation of any other particular Covenant betwixt them and St. *Peter*, or any other Apoſtle; and in the ſame Courſe did the Apoſtles form Churches, and make them whom they converted Members of the Chriſtian Church, ſo far as can be ſeen in the Acts of the Apoſtles, or any Church-hiſtory. But of no force or value is Baptiſm with the Independents, as to bringing of Men into a Church-ſtate, or to make them Church-members, ſo as to have a Right and Title to the Privileges, or to be obliged to the Duties of Church-membership, unleſs they become Members of ſome particular Indepen-

* Acts 2. 41. 47.

dent Church, by entring a particular Covenant with ſome particular Paſtor; nor is it a being converted to Chriſtianity in common that they ſeek, but a being converted from it; and the Converſion they require is a Converſion from Communion with the Catholick or Univerſal Church to a total Independency upon it, and from all manner of Relation or Subjection to it. So that, baptized Perſons without this are little better eſteemed of with them, than as Heathens or Infidels. How unſcriptural this is, I may upon the foreſaid Grounds appeal to any ordinary Capacity, and ſo proceed to explain two or three common Diſtinctions of the Church.

Queſt. IV. What is meant by the Catholick Church, and what by a particular Church?

Anſ. All particular Churches as thoſe of *Judea*, *Aſia*, *Syria*, *Galatia*, *Macedonia*, and the like, which we read of, or which we commonly call Churches, are but ſo many Parts or Members of the Catholick Church; which takes ſo many particular Denominations from the Countries or Cities where the Goſpel comes; thoſe particular Churches being only ſaid to be diſtinct Churches as the Chriſtians in them are under the Inſpection and Government of one Biſhop with his Presbyters, and that the Church under the Goſpel is now Catholick or Univerſal, this is that wherein we Gentiles rejoice. For it is not now confined to any one Place or People, as it was under the Old Teſtament-diſpenſation, when

:n in *Jury* only was God known,
Name was great in *Iſrael*, *Je-* Pſal. 76. 1, 2.
lem was his Tabernacle, and
Dwelling-place in *Sion*. Whereas now the
:ition-wall being broken down,
e is no reſpect of Perſons, Jews * Acts 10.
ientiles *with God* *, *but in every* 34, 35.
ion he that feareth God, and
eth Righteouſneſs is accepted with him. For
e twain, *Jews* and *Gentiles* throughout the
ole Earth are become one Body, one myſtical
y in Chriſt, who is the Head †,
this the Apoſtle celebrates as † Epheſ. 2.
Myſtery of Chriſt not made 14, 15, 16.
wn to former Ages, as it is 18. 20.
revealed by the Spirit. What?
: the *Gentiles* ſhould be Heirs * Ep. 3. 4. 6.
he ſame Body *, and partakers
:he Promiſe of Chriſt by the Goſpel. In
word, the Congregation of all in all Nati-
that profeſs Faith in, and Obedience to
iſt, and his Goſpel, being baptized, are the
Body, the Catholick Church.

Queſt. V. How is this Catholick Church
Chriſt viſible, and how is it inviſible?

Anſ. It is partly viſible, and ſo it conſiſts of
1 that make outward Profeſſion of that Faith
Obedience throughout the whole Earth;
partly inviſible, being the Company of all
ever have been, are or ſhall be inwardly
:re in that Profeſſion to the World's End;
this inviſible Church includes as well the

Saints triumphant in Heaven, as them that are yet militant upon Earth, and theſe latter are ſaid to be inviſible, not as if they were not to be ſeen in their times; but becauſe their Hearts cannot be diſcerned by any human Eye, the Lord alone knoweth them that are his in truth and ſincerity. The diſtinction is truly ſcriptural, and I ſhall only remark two things here. Firſt, that all thoſe glorious things ſpoken of the Church in Scripture, as that it is Chriſt's Spouſe, a Spiritual Houſe or Temple, the Family or Houſhold of God, the City of God, the *Iſrael* of God, the Kingdom of God, the New *Jeruſalem*, a Holy Nation, the peculiar People, the choſen Generation, the Royal Prieſthood, the one Flock, the one Sheepfold, the *Sion* wherein God hath his Reſidence for ever, the Mountain of the Lord exalted above all Mountains, into which all Nations ſhould flow, that Church which God purchaſed with his own Blood; they all, and whatever elſe do primarily, and in their firſt and chief Intention belong to the Church inviſible, conſiſting of ſincere Chriſtians, as the one Body, into which all are upon Covenant-terms, baptized by one Spirit, being thereby aſſociated with a Spiritual Knot, under one Spiritual Head, even Jeſus Chriſt by the Holy Ghoſt; and yet to the Church viſible of all Ages in all Countries, conſiſting of Tares and Wheat, good and bad Chriſtians, the ſincere, godly, and wretched Hypocrites, they do belong by Analogy and Participation; and that for this great Reaſon, becauſe every one that profeſſeth Chriſtianity is in judgment of charity

pre-

presumed to be sincere in his profession, untill he be convicted of scandalous Sin, or untill the Harvest of the World, when there shall be a final Separation, and the Tares shall be gathered together, and bound in Bundles to be cast into the Fire, but the Wheat shall be gathered into God's Barn*. Now secondly, that there is this unavoidable Mixture of good and bad Members at present in Christ's visible Church, it shews some Men's Plea for separation from our Church, to be very weak, *viz.* that of mixt Communions therein, of which more hereafter. Mean while, because there are false, Idolatrous and Heretical Churches, or Assemblies, of them that profess the Christian Name, which have once been faithful Spouses of Christ, but are now apostatized, and become Harlots, unto which no Man that hath a care of his Soul can safely unite or incorporate himself; let that therefore be our next question.

* Mat. 13. 20.

Quest. VI. How may a True and Orthodox visible particular Church, unto which a Christian may safely, and in duty is bound to join himself, as being a sound Member of the Catholick Church of Christ (the one Body) be known from a false Church from which he ought to separate?

Ans. Not to mention here the many false Notes, or Marks given of a Church by them of the *Roman* Communion; it may yet be proved to

to instruct them for whose sake I write, is generally said concerning two of the what cannot well be waved in a Discou Catholick Unity, and Church-Comm They are the first and the seventh of tho teen Notes given by *Bellarmine:* All whi throughly and particularly examined, ar proved by the *London* Divines, in their sho learned Discourses against Popery, in th Reign of King *James* the IId. Those I speak briefly of here, are the Name of C lick, and the Union of Members wit Head.

1. For the Name of Catholick, it is m diculous in the Papists first to appropriate themselves, calling themselves *Roman* Cath and then to argue from the Name to the The *Roman* Church is at best but a part Church, and so but a part of the Cat Church, and a very corrupt part, if any a So that to call themselves *Roman* Catholic as improper as to say, particular Univ which to join to any one Subject, Pers Nation, is no better than Non-sence, and strain them to any one is a manifest Con ction. The Catholick Church which we i Creed profess to believe, is the whole C all the World over; which, as it is but even as *Noah's* Ark was but one, the one F the one Fold, the one Bride

* Cant. 6.9. Spouse, and the one Body *,
Mat. 13.14. it in all respects truly Cath
Luk. 13.24. Catholick in time, compreher
Ephes. 4.4. all the faithful from the begi

unto the End of the World. Catholick in place, comprehending of all Nations, *Jews* and *Gentiles* at the fartheſt diſtance; ſo that, every true Church, and all Chriſtians in it, are all Members of the one Catholick Church, of the one Body, whether called Catholicks, or no.

2. Nor is there any neceſſity of any other Churches being united to, or depending on, either the Church of *Rome*, or any other Perſon, or Society of Perſons, that will preſume to uſurp the Title of the Churches Head, as the Pope doth; the moſt eſſential part of that definition, the Popiſh Doctors give of a true viſible Church is this, that it is united to, and depends upon, and yields an unlimited Obedience unto the Pope, as St. *Peter*'s Succeſſor, and even the Churches viſible Head, the Univerſal Paſtor, and Chriſt's Vicar upon Earth: And all are Hereticks that are not united to, and under the Pope's Regiment as ſuch. But it is not they, that can produce any Authority for this proud Claim, either from Chriſt's Inſtitution, or the Apoſtle's Practice, in either planting or ſettling any of the Churches. Let the Scriptures be ſearch'd from firſt to laſt, and who can find any clauſe or paſſage, that either directly or indirectly, teacheth any thing of other National Churches, or the Chriſtians in them, owing Obedience to, or dependance upon *Rome*, or the Biſhop there. Not one of thoſe thouſands whom the Apoſtles converted had any ſuch thing taught them upon their being converted and baptized, and added to the Church, that they muſt of neceſſity obey any one Univerſal viſible.

ble Head of that Church, to which th
added. and indeed in all probability n
them never ſo much as heard either of A
the Biſhop of *Rome*, or of any ſuch thin
being the Mother-Church, or the Biſhe
premacy, or Infallibility. More need
ſaid here of the falſe Notes of a true
given by our common Adverſary. W
have given us by all ſorts of Proteſtant Cl
are contained in the 19th Article of t
ctrine of the Church of *England*, and th
have our diſſenting Brethren very late
ſcribed. The words of the Article are
loweth (*The viſible Church of Chriſt i*
gregation of faithful Men, in which t
Word of God is preached, and the Sac
duly adminiſtred according to Chriſt's
nance in all thoſe things that are of
requiſite to the ſame.) According to th
cle, in what Place, Nation, Country o
dom ſoever the Word of God is truly pr
ſo that the Doctrine is ſound and or
and the Sacraments are rightly adm
according to Chriſt's Inſtitution in all e
things, in that Nation, Place or King
ſuch a true Church, as is a ſound and or
Part of the Catholick Church, as unto wh
profeſſed Chriſtians or baptized Perſon
may, and in duty ought to join themſelv
with which they ought to communicate
Holy Offices and Adminiſtration, and t
trary muſt hold good if this be ſo, that
no true orthodox Church in any Place
them. Variety of Arguments may be l

to prove the former of theſe Propoſitions, which I ſhall not need to produce, it being openly allowed of by the ſeparating Teachers by their ſubſcribing this Article with 35 more, as is required of them, to have any benefit of the late Act of Toleration. And the proper Inference from it, is to confirm all that are in communion with the Church of *England*, as it is now eſtabliſhed in the true Grace of God, wherein they ſtand, as having no juſt Cauſe to be ſhaken in mind by any bad Suggeſtions of either of its Adverſaries, Papiſts or Diſſenters, betwixt whom our Church hath been a long time truly militant, and like Corn, ground betwixt two Mill-ſtones. No man that will in the leaſt exerciſe his underſtanding aright, need be at all perplexed by thoſe, for we have not only the Confeſſion of all the reformed Churches in Chriſtendom, but alſo of the Chief of the Diſſenters themſelves, as may be ſeen at large in the Books cited in the Margent of the Preface, that the eſtabliſhed Church is found and orthodox, and a true Church of Chriſt; all that they pretend to deſire, being to reform it more, and to make it ſtill purer: But in all that they find fault with, abundant ſatisfaction hath been given to all that are unprejudicial Inquirers, as by divers larger Volumes ever ſince the Reformation, and more eſpecially in the late *London*-caſes put forth in the latter End of King *Charles* the Second's Reign. It is confeſſed by us, that ſome accidental Abuſes and Corruptions may be picked up to the ſhame of many, our, both Miniſters and Members: As what Church on Earth

is

is there perfectly free from the like? An
indeed we ought to bewail, and pray
and in our reſpective Stations endeavou
form. But for the Conſtitution of our
as to all the eſſential Requiſites of either
doct Doctrine, Worſhip, or Diſcipline,
not afraid to juſtifie them, as having no
humane Invention in them required, or
ſed as eſſential to them: Nothing tau
Doctrine which is a mere Command
Tradition of Men, nor the leaſt thing
whole Conſtitution, that is ſinful or con
God's Word or Commandment; and
no doubt but all Men are ſafe in this C
Communion as to their final State, that
conſcientiouſly walk up to the holy D
and to the Rules of Godlineſs therein
and preſcribed them. In this way may
thearfully ſay, whoſoever they may
may call it Hereſie, or any other evil th
this way, will we after the Examples
Primitive Churches, and Chriſtians, an
moſt Holy Martyrs, who reformed this
and lived in, and died for it, and left i
we now have it; after theſe ſo good
(the beſt that can be,) will we unm
continue in the eſtabliſhed Churches Co
on to worſhip the Lord God of our
And having thus juſtified this Churc
true, and orthodox, by the undoubted
a true Church, by a very eaſie Inverſi
contrary Propoſition, that without ſuch
of the Word and Sacraments there can
true or orthodox Church in any Place or

whatſoever, will put our Adverſaries very hard to it to juſtifie themſelves. I hope the Reader will be content to take it for granted at preſent, and if ſo,

1. The Papiſts boaſtings of the Church, the Church, as if theirs was the only Church on Earth, muſt be moſt vain-glorious, while the World ſeeth them conſcious to themſelves of the Inconſiſtency of their Doctrine with the Word of God, by their locking it up in an unknown Tongue; by their forbidding the Peoples reading it, yea or having it ſo much as in their Houſes upon pain of Hereſie, who muſt be content with what Portions of Scripture they ſuffer to run in ſome few pudled Streams in their Service-books; by their making the Churches Decrees and Traditions the Rule of Faith, and over-ruling the plaineſt Scripture-doctrines by, and ſubjecting them to, the Popes corrupt Gloſſes, and Interpretations, as being an infallible Judge, and by their ſtudious holding the People in that Communion to an implicit Faith, and blind Obedience: And for the Sacraments, while they add five to thoſe two of Chriſt's Inſtitution, and for them two, while they corrupt them with divers Errours, and Superſtitions, in no wiſe agreeable to their Nature, End or Inſtitution, as the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, their half Communion, and eſpecially their turning the Lord's Supper into the abominable Maſs; to which if we add their Prayers in an unknown Tongue, their Invocation of Angels and Saints, and eſpecially the Virgin *Mary*, or at leaſt of God by their Intercession, together with

with their Image-worſhip, all which conſidered, I may ſafely conclude, that what ſuch Jewels may lie hidden in the Rubbiſh of that Communion, as have not bowed the Knee to *Baal*, is known to the All-ſeeing God alone: But for the Body of the Papacy in an intire Obedience to, and full Communion with the *Roman* Church, it is ſo far from being a true and orthodox Church of Chriſt, whereunto any Chriſtians, tender of their Souls, can ſafely join themſelves, that it is a very faction againſt Chriſt and his Church; a very Harlot for Idolatry and divers Abominations. Now in this cenſure, I doubt not of our diſſenting Brethrens free conſent with me. But then this Task will fall to their ſhare to juſtifie their Churches alſo to be true Churches of Chriſt, by theſe Marks of a true Church, which they can never do, as any reaſonable Perſon may judge, at the firſt Motion of this *Quære*, being no better, whatever their Doctrine and Sacraments be, than Churches gathered out of, and ſet up in oppoſition to the Church of *England*, which the moſt and beſt of themſelves have freely acknowledged to be ſound and orthodox, and which hath been all along look'd upon by reformed Churches with honour, as the chief Bulwork to keep Popery out of them all; but to let this paſs with this ſhort remark in this place, the Separatiſts of all Denominations have cauſe to expect the being often called to an account for their Church-ſtate, notwithſtanding their appropriating unto themſelves, (like the *Donatiſts*, *Novatians* and *Catharists* of the Primitive Times) to be the only Saints and godly People:

ople: The People of God, the Church of God, Church in God, with other ſuch like con-ents. Some of them (to mention ſo many ided diſorderly Fractions in the beſt order I here) ſome of them I ſay, avowing them-es to be above theſe Ordinances of beggarly diments, ſome pretending to no other Admi-ration of Doctrine or Teachings, but that of Spirit, or of the Light within them, who in their conſtant practice contradict this r foundation Principle, reading and conning Holy Scriptures in the Tranſlation made h the help of human Learning, reading and ning their own Books and Catechiſms, hol-g forth and teaching in their Meetings, and ſo much as their A, B, C, doth their Spirit ight within teach them in other Courſe, than ſed by other Men. Some of them ſcornful-ecrying the Sacrament of Baptiſm as mere ter-baptiſm, or ſprinkling; ſome denying it nfants. Some in contempt calling the other ſed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Bread Wine. The ſame Perſons denying the Au-ity of the Holy Scriptures, (from which a-: the true Doctrine is derived) in the Let-; ſome maintaining no conſtant Courſe of yer, but only praying when the Spirit moves they phraſe it,) that is, when the fit takes n. Some wholly diſuſing the Lord's Supper, igh pretending a more Divine Eſteem of it, declaiming againſt all Forms of Prayer, and i diſuſing the Lord's Prayer it ſelf. All of n without any lawfully called Miniſtery in eſſion from the Apoſtles, and then *how ſhall*

* Rom. 10. 15. *they preach unleſs they be ſent* *; All which Defects (and more of what was from the beginning and in all Ages of Chriſt's Church are ſo notorious, that it may puzzel any conſiderate unprejudiced Perſon, to diſcern ſo much as the Fact of a Church in moſt of the Sectarian Societies for never was there any viſible Church of Chriſt, whether planting or planted, whether flouriſhing, and in peace, or perſecuted, and under the Croſs, without theſe Ordinances, leſs or more, as its preſent State would permit, wherein all that owned the Chriſtian Name met together to worſhip God and Chriſt, either openly in Churches, upper Rooms, or Oratories, or ſecretly, even in Dens and Caves of the Earth, where they could do no better.

But if any of the Sects can lay claim to the Marks of a true Church, it muſt be the Presbyterians, who are the moſt orderly, orthodox, and leſt fanatical of them all. But to wave what we our ſelves think to be great Deficiencies in their Conſtitution, particularly in their Ordinations, they themſelves confeſſing our Church to be true and orthodox, they can make no better of themſelves than a Sect here in *England*, and in the Primitive Language, an Altar ſet up againſt an Altar, and a Church formed in, and in oppoſition to an Orthodox Church, which in no Age could eſcape the Cenſure of an arrant Schiſm, making a ſcandalous Breach in the Church's Unity and Peace. And for their Divine Worſhip, what a Mixture there is of human Inventions in all their Managements thereof,

and

and how unſcriptural their way of Worſhip is in all the eſſential Parts thereof, is in my opinion made out by matter of fact compared with the Scriptures, unanſwerable in a late Manual of Doctor *King*, a Reverend Biſhop in *Ireland*, and ours he juſtifies to be according to, and in no wiſe contrary to the Word of God, and without any mixture of human Inventions.

By that and other ſuch good Books of ſmall Price, ſuch care hath been taken by our learned painful Clergy to inform the common People aright, that whoſoever hath Money to purchaſe, and Eyes to read them, and any competent Faculties to underſtand, muſt be excuſeleſs, if for want of ingenuous trying all things, he fall into Errour and Separation. Now there are only two things more that I would here ſuggeſt to the People's conſideration, although often mentioned elſe-where, being in my opinion more adapted to the Countrey-man's capacity, than much more learned Reaſons for their adherence to the Church of *England*.

1. Whoſoever hath any Reverence to the precious Memory of our glorious Martyrs, not queſtioning either their Piety, Integrity, or Salvation, can never doubt of either their own Safety or Duty in a firm holding their Communion with it; for the well-meaning ſimple Countryman cannot be anſwered by any ſeparate Teacher, if he ask him, wherein the Religion of the Church of *England* at this day differs eſſentially from that of the Holy Martyrs; or whether this Church's Communion be other than they ſettled and left it, or than they lived

and died in and for it, except for the better; and if it was a good Church in their Profeſſion and Conduct, why not in ours? And if they were ſaved in its Communion, why may not we be ſo too? And if we can be ſaved in this Communion, what good Cauſe can we have, or how dare we ſeparate from it? Or laſtly, who can ſeparate from it now, but he muſt have ſeparated from them, and their Communion upon the ſame Grounds upon which he ſeparates from us, had he lived in their Times?

2. Whoſoever hath any Reverence for any other Proteſtant Church throughout Chriſtendom, muſt have a like Veneration for ours. For (as Mr. *Durell*'s Book of the Doctrine, Worſhip, and Government of the Reformed Churches abroad hath left it indiſputable,) There is nothing injoined, nothing practiſed here but the ſame, or, what is equivalent is to be found in them; ſo that, upon the ſame grounds, that any one diſguſts or ſeparates from the Church of *England*, he muſt do the ſame in whatever other reformed Church providence may order his Habitation. Now what ſerious Chriſtian will like of ſuch Principles as will render him a Nonconformiſt or Separatiſt in whatever Proteſtant Church he might have lived, or may happen to live, throughout the whole World?

Now having thus diſpatched the ſixth Queſtion, *viz.* How a true and orthodox Church may be diſtinguiſhed and known from a falſe, heretical or unſound Church? It will (becauſe I have ſaid that a Man is made a Church-member in his Baptiſm) be proper to make this my next Queſtion. *Queſt.* VII.

Queſt. VII. Of what Church is a Man made a Member in his Baptiſm? Is it of the Catholick or Univerſal Church, or is it only of the particular Church he lives in?

The Title of this Diſcourſe (Catholick Unity, *&c.*) ſuggeſts the true Anſwer, or at leaſt the true Anſwer will warrant the Title, and let but the Reader have an Eye as he goes along to the fore-going Suggeſtion, *viz.* (the Neceſſity of ſeparating from all other Orthodox and Reformed Churches, upon the ſame Grounds, upon which any one ſeparates from the Church of *England*) and he will find the Anſwer very much to favour it.

Anſ. My Anſwer to the *Quære* then is, that a Man is doubtleſs made in Baptiſm a Member of the Church Catholick, even of that Church which conſiſts of baptized Perſons throughout the whole World, and even of that Church unto which all are, or ſhall be added that ſhall be ſaved *. For that Church is all founded on one Covenant, and therefore it is it ſelf but one Body, however diſperſed all the World over, it is but one Church, where-ever it is, that God hath purchaſed with his Blood †, one Church whereof he is Saviour, being the Saviour of the Body *, from which Myſtery the Apoſtle argues for a Man's being joined to one Wife, ſo as they twain to be one Fleſh;

* Act. 2.47.

† Act. 20.28.

* Epheſ. 5. 23, *&c.*

for in like manner doth Chriſt love his Church, as a Man ought to love his Wife, and in like manner are Chriſtians Members of Chriſt's one myſtical Body, of his Fleſh, and of his Bones; and on this Account alſo, the Church is but one Temple, one Spiritual Building, one Houſe of God, for all the Rooms in a Building, or in an Houſe are but parts of that Building or Houſe, and ſo are all Churches, and all Chriſtians Members of the one Catholick Church, and as the Temple was by God's Appointment but one, and as the Jewiſh Church was but one Church, ſo is the Chriſtian Church, but one Spiritual Temple, and but one Church, being no diſtinct Church from that of the *Jews*, but grafted into its Stock and Root, ſo that it is become one Sheepfold under one Shepherd *; for both believing *Jews* and believing *Gentiles* are united by Chriſt into one Church, being built upon the Foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief Corner-ſtone †, that unites both Sides of the Building or Spiritual Houſe, and holds them together, and as in a Body, all the Members have all things common, ſo is it the Nature of a Society to be a Community, and ſo is the Church of God, which the Apoſtle expreſly ſaith *, is one Body, no particular Churches, no particular Chriſtians having their peculiar Privileges; but being all built upon the ſame Foundation, and all worſhipping the ſame God, and the ſame Saviour,

* Joh. 16. 16.

† Rom. 11. 17, 18.

* Epheſ. 4. 4, 5, 6.

our, profeſſing the ſame Faith, inheriting the ſame Promiſes, and injoying all the ſame Spiritual Church-privileges; as the Apoſtle there expreſſeth it, one Body, and therefore one Spirit, one Hope of our Calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm, one God, and Father of all, in all which there are no Encloſures, no Partitions, no Peculiarities, nothing of Divine Appointment to diſtinguiſh or ſeparate, but all Churches, and all Chriſtians, are Members of the one Body, and have all Spiritual Privileges in common, as Members of the one Body. Now ſeeing Baptiſm is the Sacrament of Admiſſion into the Church, and into the Unity and Fellowſhip of the one Body, giving a Right to all the Priviledges of the one Body, it is therefore of the whole Catholick Church, that it makes Men Members, and not of any particular Church whatſoever, as particular; for as all the Men in *England*, even in the remoteſt Parts thereof, are the Queen's Subjects, and are all Members of the ſame Kingdom, although they do their reſpective Duties as Subjects, and as Members of the ſame Kingdom in the places where they live, ſo are all baptized Perſons Members of the whole Church, although they can only do their reſpective Duties as Church-members in the Fellowſhip and Communion of that particular Church where they are preſent. Now after the ſtating of Church-memberſhip follows naturally that of Church-communion, which brings on the next Queſtion.

Queſt. VIII. With what Church is it a Chriſtians, or a baptized Perſon's Duty to hold Communion? Is it with the whole Catholick Church, or with ſome particular Church only?

Anſ. The word (Communion) would indeed incline a Man to believe it is with ſome particular Church only; for in common Speech, it ſignifies a perſonal Preſence in religious Offices, as when Men in ſome particular Congregation pray together, hear God's Word together, and receive the Lord's Supper together, and they cannot otherwiſe hold communion at all, (which I ſhall hereafter ſhew to be the Duty of all Chriſtians,) But yet, however Men are truly ſaid in ordinary ſpeaking to be in communion with one another, when they perſonally join together in theſe external Acts of publick Worſhip, and ſo to live in that particular Church's Communion, wherein they join in thoſe religious Offices; Yet more properly ſpeaking, Church-communion is in Time and Nature anteceden to theſe, they being only Exerciſes of that Communion; for in ſtrict Speech, to be in communion with a Church is to be a Member there and it is of the Catholick Church that we a made Members in Baptiſm, and it is our Churc membership that gives us a Right (being b tized) to Church-privileges, and that lay common Obligation upon us to all the D and Offices of a Church-relation; for it i

this Body, the Church, as it is in any civil Body or Corporation. No Man can lay claim to any Privilege of, or is capable of performing any Office in a Corporation, who is not a Free man, and no more hath any Man right to the Privileges or Exerciſes of Church-communion, that is not in a State of Communion with it, or that holds not to his Church-memberſhip, it is juſt ſo in the natural Body. Nothing can do the part of a Member of the natural Body, that is not vitally united to it: The Eye cannot ſee, nor the Ear hear, nor the Feet walk, if they be ſeparate from, or not vitally united to the Body. Nor doth that Union conſiſt in theſe natural Actions, but theſe natural Actions are the Conſequents of their Union to the Body: Now what natural Union is in the natural Body, that is communion in Bodies politick, whether civil or religious. Men muſt be Members of them, before they can perform Offices in them, or claim Privileges proper to them. So that, Church-memberſhip, and conſequently Church-communion is antecedent to the Exerciſes of either of them, and therefore thoſe religious Acts and Exerciſes are no Acts of Communion that are performed by ſuch as are no Church-members, nor will own themſelves to be ſo, but are profeſſed Members of ſeparate Societies, and only come to Church-aſſemblies to ſerve a Turn.

Now ſeeing our Right to Acts and Exerciſes of Church-communion, in all religious Offices, comes only from our being Church-members, and ſeeing it is of the Catholick Church that

we are made Members by being baptized, from hence it follows, that all Church-communion primarily, and principally relates to the Catholick Church, and not to that particular Church, where neceſſity by reaſon of diſtance of place and conveniency of Habitation requires the Exerciſe thereof; for Example:

When we pray together in our Churches in the Name of Chriſt, We muſt conſider Chriſt as the Great High Prieſt, and the Saviour of the whole Body, who mediates for his whole Church, and all its Members as well as for our ſelves who pray together, and praying with one another, we pray for one another, not only them that are preſent with us, but alſo for all our Fellow-members, and by this means (which is a very great Comfort) Chriſtians in one Church have the benefit of the Prayers of Chriſtians in all other Churches throughout the whole World, who all pray to the ſame heavenly Father, through the Merits and Mediation of the ſame common Saviour, for the ſame common Bleſſings for the whole Chriſtian Church, whereby our Prayers become a right good Exerciſe of Catholick Unity, and Church communion and Fellowſhip.

Now it is hereby very plain, that theſe Exerciſes of Church-communion primarily relate to the Church Catholick. And hereof we may make this good uſe (by the way) that it is no diſhonour therefore to our Prayers, that they are called Common-Prayers, for they are much more valuable for being ſo, and eſpecially that they are ſo compoſed, as to be truly Catholick, ſo that

that any Chriſtian, of what Nation ſoever may without ſcruple join in them; being ſuch as may become any Members of the one Body to put up, and in this reſpect alſo, the Church's Prayers incomparably excell the *Ex tempore* Prayers in ſeparate Meetings, which depending wholly upon the Abilities and Diſpoſedneſs of every particular Miniſter, can never be ſuppoſed to be ſo catholick, either in Petitions or Thankſgivings, as all publick ones ought to be, being formed according to the Humours and eſpouſed Opinions of each particular Perſon whoſe they are; far from relating (as our Holy Liturgy conſtantly doth) to the whole Church, and in no wiſe ſavouring of a Catholick Spirit, or of Catholick Unity.

In like manner when we receive the Lord's Supper, we are not to look upon it as a private Supper, or a Spiritual Feaſt for our own Souls only, but as a common Chriſtian Feaſt, ſignifying our Union and Confederation with the whole Body of Chriſtians, as well as with our Neighbour-Chriſtians, that receive together with us. How ſignificant hereof both the Sacramental Bread and Cup are, may be ſeen in the Hymn called the Thankſgiving after the Lord's Supper in the End of the ſinging Pſalms, and much more might be ſaid thereof, which for brevities ſake I muſt omit.

Only this Obſervation I would offer hence, that this is very proper for them to conſider of, who ſeparate from the eſtabliſhed Church upon the Account of mixt Communions. They dare not receive the Lord's Supper with us, becauſe

of

of ſo many wicked Perſons whom we promiſcuouſly admit to the Holy Sacrament without Expulſe, and they think they cannot communicate with ſuch Company without being defiled; in anſwer to which, we will freely acknowledge it a great Defect, that ſuch evil Men are not more frequently repelled from the Holy Ordinance, and it is a too frequent perjurious Neglect in our Church-officers, when they connive at, take no notice of, and will not preſent any notoriouſly wicked Men to the Ordinary in order to their Reformation, and moſt inexcuſable it muſt be, if thoſe in Authority be corrupted, ſo as not to execute holy Diſcipline impartially; that all incorrigible evil Livers may be ſeparated from all Church-communion till they be aſhamed, and manifeſt their Repentance. All which yet, is far from being any good ground for Separation, or any good Chriſtians forſaking the Lord's Table, or any other holy Ordinances in this, or any other Orthodox Church whatſoever. Why? Becauſe, ſeeing Church-communion relates to the Univerſal Church, Men may by the ſame reaſon ſeparate from all Chriſtian Churches; no National, no Parochial Church on earth being free from wicked Members; and beſides, Men may on this Account as well fear being defiled by bad Men's communicating in any other Congregation, or in any other part of the whole Catholick Church, as in our Church's Aſſemblies, ſeeing the Lord's Supper is a Communion with the whole Church and all its Members, as well abſent as preſent, or whereſoever.

This

This Plea for Schiſm is not new, it is as ancient as the Sects of the *Donatiſts* and *Novatians*, (thoſe convicted Schiſmaticks in the Primitive Churches) received by the *Independents* and *Browniſts* in this Age, as indeed almoſt all the dividing Principles of our Sects are no better than ancient Hereſies new vamped and dreſſed up; whoſo pleaſes may find it examined at large, and clearly confuted in one of the late *London*-caſes, of which I ſhall therefore ſay no more here, but what my preſent Subject prompts me to, *viz.*

Whoſoever they be that ſeparate from the Communion of an Orthodox Church, becauſe of wicked Mens being unavoidably mixed with the good therein, and therefore form or ſeek a more pure Society to join with. They cannot miſs of becoming Schiſmaticks, becauſe it implies a confining their Communion to their own ſelect Company excluſively to the whole Body of Chriſtians all the World over. For thus Largue; Either their Communion is no larger than their own gathered Church, or it is larger. If it be larger, then muſt they ſtill Communicate with other Churches as Parts of the Catholick Church, though not preſent with them; but none of thoſe Churches are perfectly free from bad Men and corrupt Members in them; and if ſo, then is it to no purpoſe for them to ſeparate from the National Church, nor will it at all help them, or anſwer their hopes, but they will ſtill be defiled by corrupt Communion. But in caſe their Communion be no larger than their own gathered Church, confining their Communion

nion thus, They are, *ipſo facto*, Schiſmaticks in dividing themſelves from the one Body, the Catholick Church, and from the Communion of Saints therein. All their Prayers and Preachments, and Sacramental Adminiſtrations will then be no Acts of Catholick-communion, but plain Schiſm or a Schiſmatical Combination. Such is the true Notion of Church-communion, and all the Acts and Exerciſes of Church-communion according to the ancient Meaſures of Catholick Unity, they all relate to the Univerſal Church in general, primarily and principally, and not to any particular Church only. And now on the other hand, to ſet Men ſtraight in their Duty of communicating with that particular Church wherein they live, in ſpecial, follows the next Inquiry.

Queſt. IX. Are not all Chriſtians obliged in Duty to maintain Communion in ſpecial with that particular Church, wherein they have their conſtant Abode and Reſidence?

Anſ. Doubtleſs they are, if that particular Church be an Orthodox Part of the Catholick Church. Their Obligation to Catholick-communion is ſo far from leaving Chriſtians at large, that from their Obligation to Catholick-unity, and Communion reſults an Obligation to communicate with that particular orthodox Church where they live, for which there is this plain *Reaſon*; becauſe without ſuch communicating with

with that particular Church which is a ſound Part of the Church Catholick, it is impoſſible they ſhould hold communion with the Church Catholick; it is a plain caſe, no Man can either in publick Prayers, Sacraments, or holy Offices actually join with the whole Catholick Church, and all Chriſtian Churches in it; it is not poſſible for any one to be perſonally preſent, in or with them all. No other way can be found out by reaſon of diſtance of place for a Chriſtians holding communion with the whole Catholick Church, and all its Members (to which every one is bound as a Member of the Catholick Church) but by his performing his Duty in that Orthodox Part of the Catholick Church where he abides; for even as the Union and Communion of the natural Body conſiſts in the Union and Communion of all its Parts and Members, and no Member can be united to or communicate with the Body, unleſs it be united to ſome part of the Body: Even ſo, no Member of Chriſt's myſtical Body can be ſaid to be united to, or communicate with it, or join in it, unleſs he be united to, and communicate with ſome orthodox Church that is a ſound Part of the Catholick Church, the one Body; for that very reaſon therefore (if there were no other) muſt a Chriſtian hold communion with that particular Church, becauſe he cannot otherwiſe hold communion with the Church Catholick. He muſt be a Separatiſt and Schiſmatick from this, if he do not communicate with that. Now by this any ordinary Chriſtian may be inſtructed how to ſteer in all doubts and difficulties in matter of

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Church-communion, and to this End he hath no more to do, but only to examine and conſider whether that particular Church he lives in be a ſound and orthodox Part of the Catholick Church (and ſo the moſt Eminent Diſſenters have acknowledged it once to be;) and if he find it ſo, or can ſay nothing to the contrary, then is he bound to Church-communion with it at the Peril of the damnable Sin of Schiſm and cauſeleſs Separation, becauſe by this he will divide himſelf from the one Body: For this muſt he needs do, that divides from any ſound and orthodox Part thereof, and particularly that Catholick Church he lives in, which is as eaſie to underſtand as it is what it is for any Member to be divided from the natural Body: For by all that hath been ſaid, there is given a fair Account what Schiſm is, and who are Schiſmaticks, even ſuch as withdraw their Communion from the Catholick Church, by withdrawing it from that particular Church they live in, being a ſound Part of the Church Catholick. But on the other hand; the Man walks ſafely that conſtantly communicates with that particular Church he lives in, which he can ſee no other but to be ſound and orthodox, for by this means he holds communion with the one Body, the Catholick Church; in all which, I think, there is a very good Office done to every well-meaning Chriſtian; in thus aſſiſting him to compoſe his thoughts in ſo weighty a matter as Chriſtian-unity and Peace is, and in cautioning him againſt Diviſions and Separations: The Scripture moſt frequently, and moſt affectionately

nately injoining the one, and alike zealouſly forbidding the other, and he muſt be either inexcuſably ignorant or extremely perverſe who reads the Scriptures, and is not very tender of them both.

For a farther clearing whereof, I ſhall in the next Place conſider the Chriſtians, both Privilege and Duty: His Privilege by his Baptiſm, wherein he was made a Member of the Catholick Church, and ſo hath Right and Title to Church-communion: His Duty, which is conſtantly to exerciſe that Church-communion, to which he hath a Right and Title, from both which will follow the true Nature and Notion of Schiſm and Separation, and its great Sinfulneſs, ſo ſhall that be my next Inquiry, which will not now need many words.

Queſt. X. Who are they that have a juſt Claim to Church-communion, and the Exerciſes thereof as their Right and Privilege?

Anſ. Unto which the Anſwer is obvious, It is all baptized Perſons, as Church-members, until they renounce it, or forfeit it by ſcandalous Sin; for as the Members in the natural Body have their reſpective Services, and Uſes, for the Benefit of the whole Body, which cannot be performed by other things that are no Members; and as in a Body politick or civil Society, or Corporation no Man can take any Office on him, no, not for its profit, unleſs he be a Free-man and a Member thereof, and he muſt

and all holy Offices in them; and unleſs he do this, he doth not live as a Church-member, which is in effect to ſay, he lives not like a Chriſtian. For, for a Pattern to all Chriſtians, St. *Peter* converts * the 3000 Souls that were by Baptiſm made Church-members, continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtle's Doctrine, in their Fellowſhip, and breaking of Bread and Prayers. It is true, if a Church-member be juſtly excommunicated, and ſo caſt out of the Church's Communion, having no Right, he can have no Duty to communicate, but in that caſe his Duty is to reform himſelf, that he may be reconciled and received again into the Church's Boſom; and it will aggravate his Sin if he do not immediately endeavour this. But otherwiſe every one that is made a Chriſtian, or a Church-member by Baptiſm, is in duty to continue ſtedfaſtly in all the publick Exerciſes of Church-communion, which if he do not, whether he turn Infidel, Schiſmatick, or prophane, he in effect renounceth his Church-memberſhip, and conſequently his Chriſtianity. It's plainly wonderful, that ever this ſhould be made a queſtion, Whether it be a Chriſtian's Duty to come to the Church's-aſſemblies conſtantly, and to join in all Holy Offices there, where he lives; and it is methinks as eaſie to reſolve, as if the queſtion was Whether it be neceſſary for every Man that is a Chriſtian, to do the part of a Chriſtian? But ſince we have many ungodly Chriſtians in our Church's Boſom that account themſelves as good Members of the Church of

* Acts 2. 42.

England,

England, as any, who yet ſeldom come to Church to exerciſe the Acts of Church communion, I ſhall, to leave them without excuſe, add theſe following ſubſtantial Proofs of their Duty, waving thoſe Multitudes of Precepts, Examples and Promiſes ſcattered through both Teſtaments, belonging to this Subject, each of which enlarged upon, would be a particular ſtrong Argument; for I will preſume them to be ſufficiently known to all, that read the Scriptures. Now let it be obſerved,

1. That Baptiſm makes men Members as of the one Body, the Church; ſo of a viſible Church, and I hope none will doubt that God would have his Church viſible, ſo far as is poſſible, like *a City upon a Hill that cannot be hid* *;
but it would be impoſſible for the Church to be viſible without a viſible, and conſequently an external Communion of her Members in religious Offices, which is a ſolid Proof of every Chriſtians, or baptized Perſons Duty to maintain ſuch external Church-communion, unleſs it can be ſuppoſed left by God to be in the Power of Church-members to make the Church inviſible, which all irreligious Perſons endeavour as much as lieth in them, by not reſorting to the Church's Aſſemblies; now this muſt neceſſarily be a horrid guilt, and no excuſe can it have but a Man's being in travel through, or living in a Country, where no true Church, nor Church-aſſemblies are to be found to communicate with (for no Man can be bound to an Impoſſibility) and yet even in this caſe a Chriſtian's Right of Church-communion, and his

* Mat. 5.14.

Duty of maintaining it continues firm, though at preſent he be where there is no Church to communicate with.

2. It muſt neceſſarily be as much the Duty of Church-members to reſort to the Church's Aſſemblies for Church-communion, as it is of the Members of any other Society to communicate in the Affairs and Duties eſſentially belonging to that Society. What is a Body or Society but a Community, wherein the reſpective Members are to perform ſome common Duties and Offices for the common good? And it would be a ſtrange Community, where every Member might act by it ſelf, and all for their private Intereſt without reſpect to the publick good. Now ſuch a ſtrange kind of Body or Community would the Chriſtian Church be, if it were no Duty incumbent upon its Members to aſſociate in ſtated Aſſemblies for Divine Worſhip, and for the common good of one another. But without doubt it is the Duty of all within the Church's Society, high and low, rich and poor, Paſtor and Flock, of what quality ſoever, as much to reſort to Church-aſſemblies, as it is for a Major, or any Magiſtrate, and his common Council with all the Free-men in the Corporation, to come together for performing their reſpective Places for the publick Buſineſs; and the Precept for it is obvious, * *Not forſaking the aſſembling of your ſelves together, as the manner of ſome is*; where the Affirmative (frequenting the Aſſemblies) muſt neceſſarily be implied in the negative (not forſaking them.) To this purpoſe,

* Heb. 10. 25.

3. The

3. The Chriſtian Church hath divers Offices and Officers of Divine Appointment *, Apoſtles, Prophets, Evangeliſts, Paſtors and Teachers, ſome extraordinary, others ordinary, as a ſtanding Miniſtry, all for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt, till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of God unto a perfect Man, unto the Meaſure of the Stature of the fulneſs of Chriſt, which cannot be till the World's end: This Miniſtry and theſe Offices and Officers did our Lord ordain for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt. How? By teaching, inſtructing, and reproving, and by adminiſtring holy Sacraments, as well as by offering up the Prayers of the People: All which would be utterly uſeleſs and in vain, if the Members of the Body were not obliged to a conſtant actual external communicating with them in the Diſcharge of their Offices: How ſhould the Body of Chriſt be edified without it? To ſay that Chriſt's Inſtitution of this Miniſtry is uſeleſs, muſt be at leaſt a daring Preſumption, if not Blaſphemy; for it is in effect to ſay, that Chriſt was very fooliſh in inſtituting ſuch Offices and ſuch Officers in his Church to no purpoſe: And,

* Eph. 4. 12.

4. Unleſs all Church members were bound to ſuch Church-communion, the Authority conferred on this Miniſtry by Jeſus Chriſt, to bind and looſe †, that is, to admit into, and to caſt out of the Church's Communion, would be void and utterly ineffectual. He

† Mar. 16. 19. & 18. 18.

gave them the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and ſaid, *Whomſoever ye ſhall bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven: And whomſoever ye ſhall looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven.* He gave them the Authority to receive Men into the Church-communion, that they may have right to join in all religious Acts, and to ſhut out of the Church, *i. e.* from its external viſible Communion, in hearing, praying, and receiving the Lord's Supper, and this neceſſarily ſuppoſeth the Duty of them that are received into a Church, to join in all the external Acts of Church communion, for what they have a right and liberty to do, that are they bound to do, or elſe to no purpoſe is the Authority to receive into, or to exclude from them.

5. If it were not all Chriſtian's Duty, how ſhall God's publick Worſhip be ſecured and maintained in his Church? Not to adore and worſhip God, is in effect to ſay, or it implies Men's ſaying in their Hearts, *There is no God**: For if there be a God, he is to be adored and worſhipped, nor can we be truly ſaid to acknowledge God, unleſs we adore and worſhip him, and that publickly in the ſight of the World. Now wherein the publick Divine Worſhip according to Chriſt's Inſtitution conſiſts, cannot be better learn'd, than from the Practice of thoſe primitive Chriſtians, who being converted by St. *Peter's* Sermon, and baptized, was firſt formed into a Church: †*They continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtle's Doctrin, Fellowſhip, breaking of Bread and Prayers:*

* Pſ. 14. 1.

* Act. 2. 42, 47.

Prayers: That is, in hearing the Apoſtle's Sermons, and in all Acts of external Divine Worſhip, and in Sacramental Adminiſtrations, and in their publick Devotions and Prayers. But without any Obligation lying upon all Chriſtians to reſort to the Church-aſſemblies, and to join and continue ſtedfaſtly in thoſe Holy Exerciſes of Divine Worſhip, it would be impoſſible, to ſecure this publick Divine Worſhip in the Church; for by Multitudes diſcontinuing their Attendance in, and communicating together in ſuch Exerciſes of Divine Worſhip in the publick Aſſemblies, the publick Divine Worſhip would fail of courſe, and in a ſhort time come to none at all. And indeed, to this ſad paſs do all thoſe contribute as much as lieth in them, that do frequently abſent from the Churches, and the Divine Worſhip in them.

Obj. Now I ſuppoſe, ſome Men may here in excuſe of this their ungodly and irreligious Courſe ſay, that as for them, they for their parts, would certainly do what the primitive Chriſtians did, if they had (like them) the Apoſtles to preach to, and adminiſter the Holy Sacraments amongſt, and to pray with them in the Churches.

Anſ. To whom this Admonition is ſeaſonable and very neceſſary, that without all doubt, they who ſay and think ſo, do as much deceive themſelves, as *Dives* in Hell did, when he deſired *Abraham*, that one from the Dead might be ſent

to

to his Brethren to warn them, leſt
* Luke 16. 20. 31. they alſo ſhould come into that place of torment * ; and I may ſay it with ſome Confidence, of the Biſhops and Miniſters of the preſent Church, what *Abraham* ſaid of *Moſes* and the Prophets, that is, thoſe that taught them the Doctrine of *Moſes* and the Prophets, *If they will not hear* Moſes *and the Prophets, neither will they be perſwaded, though one roſe from the Dead.*

The Biſhops and Miniſters of the preſent Church, having a like lawful Call to miniſter in holy things, as all the Biſhops and Miniſters ever had from the Apoſtle's Times to this day, and their ſucceeding the Apoſtles in this Miniſtry, being undeniable by all that have not the forehead to reject all Church-hiſtory, as well as the Scriptures, and having their Authority from Chriſt as well as the Apoſtles, for
† Eph. 4. 12. he gave † ſome Paſtors and Teachers, as well as ſome Apoſtles for the Work of the Miniſtry, *&c.* till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, to a perfect Man, to the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of Chriſt, which will not be till the World's End ; and being ordained by them who were ordained by them who were ordained by the Apoſtles, or by Apoſtolical Men, ſuch as *Timothy* and *Titus*, and teaching the ſame Doctrine that the Apoſtles taught, if they preach the ſound Doctrine contained in the Scriptures, there can be no regular continuing in the Apoſtle's Doctrine, Fellowſhip and Communion, but by attending and communicating with the preſent

ſent Miniſtry; and whoſoever doth it not, neither would they the Miniſtration of the Apoſtles themſelves, if they were in Perſon amongſt them, unleſs they did perhaps exerciſe their miraculous Power to awaken them to it, which Power none of us neither have, nor pretend to.

Obj. But if we muſt join with the eſtabliſhed Miniſtry (may ſome ſay) yet we hope we are at our Choice, which of them we will join with, even him whom we beſt like.

Anſ. What Obligation lies upon Chriſtians, to their own Paſtor or Miniſter, and to that particular Church, wherein Providence hath fixed their Abode, or at leaſt to another of the ſame Communion, in caſe of a Churches too great diſtance unto which they belong, and that with their own Miniſters expreſs or implicit Conſent, I deſign to ſhew hereafter, mean while it ſhall ſuffice to ſay, that this hath been the conſtant Cuſtom in the matter of Church-communion in the Churches of all Ages, and what influence Church-cuſtoms ſhould have upon Chriſtian Practice might be ſhown at large from St. *Paul*'s arguing; * 1 Cor. 11. 16.

* *If any Man ſeem to be contentious, we have no ſuch Cuſtom, neither the Churches of God.*

To conclude this Argument, if it be the Duty of all Chriſtians to perform publick Divine Worſhip, and of every one for his part, to do his utmoſt to have the publick Worſhip continued and maintained in the Church of God;

then

then muſt it be as much their unqueſtioned Duty to reſort to their Churches, and to communicate with their lawful Paſtors, conſecrated and appointed to teach the Chriſtian Doctrine, adminiſter the Sacraments, and to offer up the Sacrifices of publick Prayers and Praiſes amongſt them, and if they were not in Duty obliged to ſuch an external conſtant actual Church communion with the preſent Miniſtry in all holy Offices and Adminiſtrations, and eſpecially with their own proper Miniſters, there would be apparent danger of an utter Failure of God's publick and ſolemn Worſhip, and this they endeavour as much as lies in them, that neglect or abſent from it.

6. Indeed in no other way but this, that I have mentioned, can any good Order be kept in the Churches of God. Now it will be very needful here: Firſt to ſhew the Neceſſity of due Order, and then what that due Order is.

As for the former, we have the Apoſtle's Warrant to affirm it to be no leſs than the Ordinance and Commandment of God, that the Churches be managed and preſerved in good order, for he ſaith, * *God is not the Authour of Confuſion, but of Peace* (in which, being oppoſed to Confuſion muſt good Order be neceſſarily implied) *as in all the Churches of the Saints*, and he gives it for the Will of God, † *That all things be done decently and in order*, in reſpect of which Order, he calls the Church a Body *, and ſets it forth as a Body fitly joined

* 1 Cor. 14. 33.

† *Ib.* verſ. 40.

* Eph. 4. 16.

joined together and compacted, by that which every Joint ſupplieth, in order to the edifying of it in love. Every Joint, that is, every Miniſter, Officer or Governour in the Church (before mentioned) they are all as Joints in the Church, and Joints in the natural Body are the very Bonds and Ligaments of Union, compacting, joining and uniting the Members one to another; the Words (every Joint, and compacted, and joined together) are marvellous ſignificant. What every Joint ſupplieth muſt compact the Body, and in no wiſe divide it, muſt make many to be one Body, and not many Bodies of one. But to wave the force of theſe words, the very calling the Church a Body, doth ſufficiently ſhew, how neceſſary good Order is in the Church; for it ſuppoſeth Church-miniſters and Church-members, all of them in their proper places, and united to one another, by obſerving a ſtrict Order, without which no Body politick can be a regular or orderly Society, but rather a confuſed Multitude, for all the Strength, Beauty and Uſefulneſs of any Society depends upon good Order among the Members thereof, much more than of a Church-ſociety. God himſelf therefore ordained all things in an exact Order in the Church of the *Jews*, even forming it into a religious Common-wealth, and we know the fatal End of *Corah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*, when they went out of that Order and raiſed a Schiſm therein *, and a like firm cloſe and orderly Union and Diſpoſition, both of Governours and Governed, both of Miniſters and

* Numb. 16.

private

private Chriſtians, there ought to be in the Chriſtian Church, as it ſucceeds the Jewiſh Church, being grafted into it.

To which end, Chriſt ordained his Apoſtles firſt, to teach, and gather, and govern his Church, and to their Succeſſors in the Miniſtry, he gave the ſame (though but an ordinary) Authority, as is manifeſt by his Promiſe to be with his Apoſtles *to the End of the World* *; for this he cannot be, otherwiſe than in their Succeſſors in the Miniſtry, ſeeing the Apoſtles had their limited time, and died as other Men, ſeeing then Order in the Church is ſo neceſſary by the Divine Ordinance and Commandment; let us in the next place examine, what Order was, and ought to be, obſerved in the Church; and it is clear in all Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, and not obſcurely delivered in the Scriptures (provided we compare them together) that in thoſe Churches which the Apoſtles and Apoſtolical Perſons planted, they committed the chief Government to the Biſhops as their Succeſſors, ſuch as *Timothy* provinciál Biſhop of *Epheſus* and *Titus* of *Creet*, and † Elders or Presbyters were ordained in every City with this Charge *, *To feed the Flock of God among them, taking the overſight of ſuch Flocks, not by conſtraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind.* And as Believers grew more numerous, they and their Succeſſors, the Biſhops ſoon found it neceſſary to ſort and diſtinguiſh Congregations, according to the Habitations and Neighbourhoods

* Mat. 28. 20.

† Tit. 2. 3. Acts 14. 23.

* 1 Pet. 5. 2.

hoods, where the Chriſtians were (which we now call Pariſhes) that is, that they that dwelt together ſhould belong to the ſame Aſſembly, and be under the Inſpection and Care of, and attend the Miniſtration of their proper Paſtor appointed and ſet over them; and for this, as they had the Example of the Jewiſh Church, which had particular Synagogues in ſeveral places where *Moſes* was read every Sabbath-day *: So have all People great Reaſon to believe it to be of Divine, or at leaſt (which is equivalent) of Apoſtolical Direction and Inſtitution, from theſe and other Texts in Scripture †. *Know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you, and eſteem them very highly in love for their works ſake, and have peace among your ſelves. Obey them that have the Rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves.* Where that the Apoſtle ſpeaks of ſpiritual, and not civil Governours, is evident from what follows, *For they watch for your Souls, as they that muſt give an account*, &c. ſuch was the Order therefore then taken in the Churches as Chriſtians encreaſed, by the Apoſtles (I think) or Apoſtolical Perſons, but beyond all Contradiction by the greateſt Authority that afterwards had place in the Catholick Church.

* Act. 15. 23.

† 1 Theſſ. 5. 12, 13. Heb. 13. 17.

Now by this Order taken in ſettling the Churches, the Relation between every particular Paſtor, and his particular People became very near and dear; he to preach the Word, to

pray

pray with, and adminiſter the Sacraments among them, to viſit their Sick, and do all miniſterial Offices among them as his own Charge and Flock more peculiarly than any other People. And (as the Duties of all Relations, Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Maſters and Servants, Magiſtrates and Subjects are always mutual) ſo that particular People to hear the word from the Mouth of their proper Miniſter, and to join with him in publick Prayers, and all other Holy Offices in the appointed publick Places for Divine Service and Church-communion in that Neighbourhood.

There is ſo much ſolidity and weight in this Account of this matter, that Mr. *Hilderſham* (a grave and ſober old Non-conformiſt) doth in his Lectures upon *John* 4. and upon *Pſalm* 51. make this Order as I well remember, the very Ordinance of God, and thus he argues: If a Miniſter be by the Ordinance of God, to miniſter to, and among a particular People; then is that particular People by the ſame Ordinance of God, to attend to the Miniſtry of that their proper and particular Miniſter, and without this it will not be eaſie to find out any likely Courſe to preſerve good Order in the Churches which God himſelf requires. And as all good Chriſtians are in Duty bound to obſerve what is requiſite to maintain due Order, ſo doth this manifeſtly ſuppoſe them bound to a conſtant external actual holding of communion with their Miniſters, and their Fellow-members in their proper Aſſemblies in that particular Church wherein they live. And if Separation from the Church

Church be a ſin: Then muſt ſuch Church-communion as I have now deſcribed be a Duty. Certainly, the Holy Scriptures too frequently, and too plainly forbid all cauſleſs Separation and Diviſion from an Orthodox church, where ever it is, as a grievous and damnable ſin, for any to be ſo hardy to deny it to be ſo, how preſumptuouſly ſoever many live in, and draw others into it. So then,

7. If I give the true Scripture notion of Separation; I think it will irrefragably prove it to be all Chriſtian's Duty, and all Church member's Duty to reſort to the Church-aſſemblies where they live, and in all Holy Offices and Adminiſtrations therein, to hold a conſtant external and viſible Communion with the whole Church of God; whereof, That particular Church, they live in, is a ſound and orthodox Part; and to the true Scripture-notion of Separation, I ſhall for Illuſtration's ſake add the like Notion of holding fellowſhip and communion.

Now what the true Scripture-notion of Separation is, will be evident from thoſe Texts among many others. * 2 Cor. 6. 17. The Apoſtle exhorting the *Corinthian* Chriſtians to flee the Society and Pollutions of Idolaters, doth thus expreſs himſelf. *Come out from amongſt them, and be ye ſeparate, and touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.* Here is indeed a Separation required of Chriſtians as their Duty, whereby it is apparent what Separation is, whether it be a Duty or a Sin, whether it be juſt or without a Cauſe; for by coming out from among them, can be no leſs

ſignified, than that they ſhould forſake and not join with the Aſſemblies of Idolaters, and by no means communicate with them in their idolatrous Worſhip; ſo that this is a right Notion of Separation, it is a not joining with a Church in Divine Worſhip in its publick Aſſemblies, which is a good and godly Separation, when a Church or its Worſhip is idolatrous or ſinful: But it is arrant Schiſm when there is no Idolatry or other ſinful thing in a Church's Communion.

Will you then have an Inſtance of this ſinful and ſchiſmatical Separation? * S. * 1 Joh. 2. 19. *John* ſpeaking of the Hereticks of that time hath theſe remarkable Expreſſions. *They went out from among us, becauſe they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: But they went out, that they might be made manifeſt, that they were not of us.*

What other can be meant by the Hereticks going out from the Orthodox, but their going to Heterodox-meetings, and forſaking the Aſſemblies of the Orthodox? And hereof the Apoſtle warns the Chriſtian Hebrews to take heed as the ready way to Apoſtacy. † Heb. 10. 25. † *Not forſaking the Aſſembling of your ſelves together, as the manner of ſome is*, which (*ſome*) muſt be the Hereticks of that time, and all Hereticks muſt be Schiſmaticks, although all Schiſmaticks are not Hereticks, but (by the Context there it is evident) they are in very great danger of Apoſtacy, and becoming Hereticks by forſaking the Orthodox-aſſemblies. So is it manifeſt, that Separa-

paration is in Scripture-language a with-drawing from, or forſaking the Church's Aſſemblies.

Which yet will be more evident ſtill by its contrary, that is, if you learn what it is to have fellowſhip and communion with a Church according to the Scriptures, which is a joining with, and a partaking of her Religious Aſſemblies; for with this Argument St. *Paul* diſſuadeth the *Corinthians*, * from eating of idol Feaſts, becauſe they were Sacrifices to evil Spirits or Devils; ſo that by partaking of them they would have fellowſhip with Devils; *For they could not drink of the Cup of the Lord, and of the Cup of Devils: They could not partake of the Lord's Table, and of the Table of Devils*; from whence may be gathered, that to partake with any ſort of Perſons in their Religious Services is to have fellowſhip or communion with them.

* 1 Cor. 10. 21, 22.

Betwixt which two Scripture-notions of Separation and Communion. I think it very plain, what the Duty of all Chriſtians and Church-members is, which is conſtantly to reſort to the Churches ſtated Aſſemblies, and in them to maintain a conſtant, external, actual and viſible Communion, together in all publick Offices, without which they cannot maintain their Church-ſtate, or hold in the Church's Communion. It is their privilege as Church-members, to have Right and Title to do this, which will be vain and unprofitable, if they do not make uſe of it; and whereas the Ordinances are rightly called Means of Grace; becauſe they convey to all that

are rightly prepared for, and a-rightly diſpoſed in them all the Bleſſings of the Goſpel, if Men can be content to be needleſly and wilfully abſent from them. They excommunicate themſelves, and thereby forfeit their Right and Title to Church-communion, and muſt fall ſhort of all the Bleſſings thereof, which are very great.

But this is not all the Miſchief of Men's not coming to the Church's Aſſemblies (whether it be through ſome Principles of Hereſie or Schiſm, or of Atheiſm, Irreligion, Worldlineſs, or of meer Sottiſhneſs and Idleneſs.) For it being one of God's choiceſt Bleſſings to any Nation or People to have a ſound and orthodox Church, and ſettled among them *: Or (which is our caſe in *England*) to have a Church reformed, after it hath been ſadly corrupted; What can more provoke God to deprive them of ſo great a Bleſſing, as their not valuing or not uſing it? God may juſtly remove his Candleſtick to a Nation that will bring forth better Fruits. He may in juſtice put out the Light for Men's ſhutting their Eyes when it ſhineth. Our Saviour's threatning is to the purpoſe †; from him that hath not, that is, that uſeth not, improveth not his Talent, that is; his Gifts, Graces or Bleſſings, ſhall be taken that which he hath, and the raſing of our Sanctuaries to the Ground ‖: The defiling the Dwelling-places of God's Name; The burning up all the Synagogues in the Land []: *The*

* Pſal. 147. 20, 21.

† Mat. 25. 29.

‖ Pſal. 74. 7.

[] Lam. 1. 4.

Ways

Ways of Sion *lamenting becauſe none come to the ſolemn Feaſts, and all her Gates deſolate*, with ſuch like dreadful Expreſſions, may be fitly applied here.

The Reformation of Religion by our Holy Martyrs, who conſtituted our Church as it now is, and not only died in its Communion, but even ſealed it with their Blood was truly glorious, as every one will confeſs that reads the Acts and Monuments thereof, and it was one of the greateſt of God's Bleſſings to our Nation: Now verily, the Lukewarmneſs, Hypocriſie, and moſt ſcandalous Schiſms as well as groſs Prophaneneſs of our People, moſt unthankful for, and making no better uſe of it, threatens the Nation with the loſs of this our moſt Holy Church and Religion; for God will be righteous, if he ſhould deprive us of the pure Doctrine, or ſuffer it to be again corrupted for our not receiving the truth in the love thereof, or for our holding it in unrighteouſneſs*: How juſtly may God plague ſo wanton a People with the Latine-ſervice, whereof they ſhall not be able to underſtand one word, for their unreaſonable Contempt of our moſt Holy Liturgy? How juſtly may he let the abominable Maſs into our Churches, for Multitudes of Men turning their Backs upon the Lord's Table? What can we ſay why our Bibles ſhould not be taken from us, or why the Holy Scriptures ſhould not be locked up from us in an unknown Tongue, ſeeing ſo few will give them the hearing or reading, having them in our Houſes at our pleaſure,

* 2 Theſſ. 2. 10. Rom. 1. 17.

and without any danger of Fire and Faggot for it? Why may not God in juſt Judgment ſend thoſe Swarms of Locuſts out of the bottomleſs Pit, the Friars and Maſs-prieſts among us, for our bad Uſage of our Goſpel-miniſters? Why ſhould he not deliver up our Rights, Laws and Liberties to them that bear ill-will to our *Sion*, nay, and our Perſons and Lives to their Tyranny and Cruelty, becauſe ſo few among us will yield the leſt Meaſure of reaſonable Obedience to our lawful Governours in Church or State? Thoſe that forſake the Church's Aſſemblies, whether out of Pride, Self-will, Stubbornneſs, Irreligion or Prophaneneſs: How will they like it to ſee our Church-doors ſhut up by the Pope's interdict, or if the Maſs-prieſts with all their Idolatries and ſuperſtitious Fopperies ſhould obtain Poſſeſſion of them? In ſhort, O that ſtrayers out of our Sheepfold (of what denomination ſoever) would ſeriouſly conſider what a Bleſſing to this Kingdom, the Reformation of Religion was, and how it was effected even by the long Study, indefatigable Pains, moſt fervent Prayers, and intolerable Sufferings, even by Fire and Faggot of our moſt Holy Martyrs, from whom (as I have ſaid) we receive our Church by ſucceſſion (conſtituted as it now is) and then (methinks, they might tremble leſt by their Levity, Ungovernableneſs, Separations or Prophaneneſs they provoke God to undo all, that which thoſe his bleſſed Inſtruments by extraordinary Aſſiſtance did to make us at this day happy: Did we but know our own Happineſs in being Members of ſo good

and

rthodox a Church, wherein we may, if in Church in Chriſtendom, maintain Catho-lnity and Communion with Chriſt's whole ch upon Earth!

nay perhaps be cenſured as too prolix in Anſwer: But no Reader of Books will ſay ; than that I might have inſiſted much lon-n it, and whoſo obſerves the common Peo-Indifferency, whether they come to Church , and what Multitudes play faſt and looſe it, that would ſtill be lookt upon as Mem-of the Church of *England*, will readily my Apology. O would to God it may ly prove a needleſs Subject, but at preſent uſt be a ſtranger to the Generality of Men's ioufneſs, that thinks not all the Miniſters , and all the Magiſtrate's Authority little gh to convince People of their Duty, and eir Sin in this Matter. Good God! What heiſtical Age are we fallen into, wherein a ter muſt be hard ſet to perſwade People to Church, ſo as to be taken off from teach-hem things neceſſary to their Salvation, to ſumm up all, ſince they that fail eir conſtant, external, actual and viſible munion with the Church in all religious es in the ſolemn Aſſemblies have this great upon them of doing what lies in them to the Church no Church, or at leſt no vi-Church; Since Church-members commu-ng with their Fellow-members in the ch aſſemblies is as eſſentially neceſſary to Church as a ſpiritual Society, as it is for Members of any civil Society, or Commu-

nity, or Body-politick, to perform their proper Duties and Offices in their reſpective Places in that Society, for its preſervation and well-being: Since all that Variety of Offices and Officers that is in the Church, of Chriſt's own Inſtitution, will be utterly uſeleſs, unleſs Church-members be in duty bound to hold communion with them in their proper Miniſtrations; ſince without it, all the Power of the Keys, all that Authority given thoſe Church officers by Chriſt to bind and looſe, that is, to receive into, and to caſt out of the Church's Communion will be inſignificant, ſince without it, neither can God's publick Worſhip be ſecured, nor any due Order kept in the Churches; and ſince the Scripture-notion of Separation is a withdrawing from, or diſuſing of the publick Aſſemblies; and ſuch Separation is always ſinful when it is cauſleſs, which evidently proves that the contrary, *viz.* conſtantly to reſort to the Aſſemblies, muſt needs be a Duty; and ſeeing laſtly, the neglect of theſe Aſſemblies, being a voluntary Excommunication, forfeits the Church member's Right and Title to them; nay, and provokes God to remove his Candleſtick, and to take his Church from a People that have no better value for, nor make better uſe of it; from any of theſe Premiſſes apart, much more from them jointly, and all together. it appears to be the indiſpenſable Duty of all Church-members as Chriſtians to continue ſtedfaſtly in their Attendance on all the ſacred Offices, and Adminiſtrations in the ſolemn Aſſemblies in that ſound and orthodox Part of the Catholick Church wherein they reſide.

Theſe

Theſe then are the Church Aſſemblies, unto which Chriſtians may ſafely, and in duty ought to joyn in Church Communion and ſtrict Unity. But then, There are other Aſſemblies oppoſite to, and interfereing with theſe; to which no Church Members may lawfully joyn themſelves, or communicate with, by the Rules of Catholick Unity and Church Communion, and them we uſually call Separate Churches, and to inſtruct the well-meaning Chriſtian Man how to diſcover them, that avoiding them, he may keep himſelf out of all the ſnares of Schiſm, I make that my next Queſtion.

Queſt. 12. What Churches are they that may be truly called Separate Churches?

Anſ. Speaking of particular Chriſtians Separation, the attentive Reader will of himſelf eaſily reſolve what their Separation is, by what I have ſhown to be the Scripture Notion thereof, whereunto I refer him. But the preſent Inquiry is concerning the Separation of whole Societies, who cannot indeed be called Churches, but by the Figure Catechreſis: But we muſt here follow the common way of expreſſion; and now to the Queſtion ſo ſtated, I might content my ſelf with this general Anſwer.

Allowing, That Chriſt's Church is Catholick, and but one Body all the World over: And again, allowing, That Church Communion muſt be Catholick alſo, and that all Chriſtian Orthodox Churches are Members of this Church Catholick,

tholick, or elſe they cannot be Members of the One Body, of the Myſtical Body of Chriſt. Theſe being granted (as they cannot be denied us) it will be as eaſy to underſtand what a Separate Church is, as what it is for a Member to be divided from a Body, or from its Members: For ſo, all thoſe Societies or Congregations muſt be Separate Churches, which are not Fellow-Members of each other in the One Body. The Catholick Church, which they cannot be, that are divided from, or are of different Communions. Thus that of an Eſtabliſh'd Church, that is, a ſound and Orthodox part of the Catholick Church; and all thoſe Perſons muſt be Separatiſts and Schiſmaticks that joyn themſelves to, or communicate with ſuch Congregations of different Communions from that particular Orthodox Church they live in, or that are in oppoſition to it. But though this general Anſwer may ſatisfy any unprejudiced Inquirer, yet for a better ſetling Mens judgments, in ſo weighty a matter, I ſhall offer two or three Rules of Catholick Communion, according to which the Ancient Chriſtians and Churches underſtood and practiſed, in maintaining Catholick Unity and Church-communion with each other. And,

1. It was their conſtant rule to have but one Biſhop, and ſo but one Church in one place or City. How numerous ſoever the Chriſtians were (as in ſome Cities there were many thouſands) far too many for any one Congregation to contain, yet were they all under the Regiment and Inſpection of one Biſhop; and (the Church being modelled after the form of the Empire) the Bi-

Biſhop of every City had the ſame juriſdiction in Eccleſiaſtical Matters, as the chief civil Magiſtrate had in civil; the Church and the City having the ſame Territory (as Doctor *Stillingfleet* hath made ſufficiently apparent againſt Mr. *Baxter*, and Dr. *Owen* in his miſchief of Separation) and this was the occaſion of *Novatus*'s falling into his ſcandalous Schiſm, he being choſen Biſhop by a factious party in the ſame City where *Cornelius* was Biſhop before. Now the true reaſon of the Primitive Churches, making this their Rule, was (as St. *Cyprian* teacheth St. *Auſtin*) That all the Chriſtians in the ſame place (though of neceſſity in different Congregations) being under the ſame Diſcipline, and obſerving the ſame courſe and method in Religious Offices. The Catholick Unity and Church communion might be kept inviolate and without Schiſm: For as St. *Cyprian* ſaith, *The Biſhop in the Church is in the place of Chriſt, and diſobedience to him is the occaſion of Schiſm.* By which Rule, thoſe muſt neceſſarily be Separate and Schiſmatical Churches and Congregations, that diſown the Government of the proper Biſhop of the City, and the Region belonging to it, ſetting up either an Anti-biſhop, or Schiſmatical Presbyters in oppoſition unto him, who are in no wiſe ſubject to his Authority.

De Unitate Eccleſiæ n. 34. *& Epiſt.* 65. *and St.* Auſtin, *Ep.* 162.

2. It was always accounted neceſſary to Church Unity and Communion, That all the Churches and Congregations in a National

Church

Church ſhould agree in the ſame Doctrine and Worſhip, as well as the ſame Government, and conſequently they muſt neceſſarily be Separate Churches, which divide from an Eſtabliſhed National Churches Communion out of a diſlike of any of theſe. Now no Man need to be told what ſort of Men do profeſſedly do this, and upon this account gather Churches or Congregations out of divers Pariſhes, and ſet up diſtinct Aſſemblies, giving diverſe reaſons for their Nonconformity, and quarrelling with the Church of *England*'s Conſtitution and Worſhip; who yet (which is a wonderful thing) will ſcarce own their making a Separation. Surely they muſt be in ſome ſtrange middle ſtate, who will neither continue in the Church, nor yet confeſs themſelves to be out of it. They would ſometimes (forſooth) make their caſe to be the ſame with our diſtinct Pariſh Churches, which by reaſon of diſtance cannot communicate together, being totally ſeparate. There is a neceſſity for the People to have diſtinct, and we may ſay, Separate Aſſemblies, which yet cannot be ſinfully or Schiſmatically Separate, being both in heart and practice in full Communion with the ſame Eſtabliſhed National Church, which is widely different from the caſe of Diſſenters Meetings, that are oppoſite Societies, founded upon contrary Principles, and acting by contrary Rules to thoſe of the Eſtabliſhed Church, drawing away its Members, and deſiring and endeavouring its Subverſion.

3. A Member of any Orthodox Church was always accounted a Member of the Catholick Church, and a Fellow Member of all Chriſtians in any other particular Orthodox Church, and (as ſuch) had free liberty of communicating with any other ſuch Church into which he came. For although actual Communion muſt of neceſſity be in ſome particular Church or Congregation, yet is not Church Memberſhip confined to that particular Church or Congregation, but in ſtrict ſpeaking relates to the whole Catholick or Univerſal Church of Chriſt. Now ſuch a Member is every Chriſtian made in Baptiſm, which gives him Right (till he renounce it) or forfeit it by ſcandalous Life) both to Memberſhip and Communion with all particular ſound and Orthodox Parts of the Catholick Church in the World.

By which Rule of Catholick Unity and Church-communion, all thoſe Societies muſt be Separate Churches or Societies, and notoriouſly Schiſmatical, that will not admit or own ſuch for their Members as are rightly baptized, and are of that Church's Communion, which is confeſſedly a ſound and Orthodox part of the Catholick Church: For the Catholick Church is but One Body, and all its Members, whether particular Chriſtians, or particular Churches, are all Fellow-Members thereof; ſo that thoſe Chriſtians or Churches muſt certainly be Separate Chriſtians or Churches, who will not own and receive other Chriſtians or Churches as their Fellow Members. Now

1. This

1. This is moſt eminently the caſe of the Independents; for no Man can be a Member of their Churches by being Baptized, whereby he is a Member of the Catholick Church, for Independent Church Membership is not founded on the Baptiſmal Covenant, but upon a particular covenant, with a particular Paſtor of a Man's own choice, which is the very conſtitution of Independency: Nay, more than this, no Member of one Independent Church is thereby a Member of another Independent Church, becauſe each Independent Church is founded on a particular Covenant with this or that particular Paſtor; ſo that Independency is not only a Schiſm and Separation from the Catholick Church. A Member whereof (which every Baptized Perſon is) can be no Member of an Independent Church, but alſo from each other; for every particular Independent Church is a diſtinct Separate Body from all other Independent Churches whatſoever: So Schiſmatical is the very conſtitution of Independency, preſerving the Unity of one Body, no not among themſelves and admitting no Members of another Society Acts of Church-communion with them, or they do, it is of courteſy, and more than they are in duty bound to do. Two Independent Churches are but at beſt like two Neighbour milies, that are very kind, and hold good reſpondency, often viſiting one another, and ing and drinking together, which ſtill re two diſtinct Families, with concerns altoge apart and ſeparate: But it is otherwiſe wi Church of Chriſt, all the Parts whereof a

one Family, one Houſhold of God, and he muſt be a Schiſmatick whoſoever makes two Families of it.

2. As for the Presbyterians, Their caſe is not much unlike, for it is a plain thing, they have diſtinct and ſeparate Aſſemblies, that can in no wiſe be reputed Members of the Eſtabliſhed National Church, nor can the Members of either of them be in any good ſenſe accounted Fellow Members, or Members of each other, being oppoſite Communions, though in one and the ſame Kingdom. It is the common Peoples uſual Plea indeed for their going to Separate Meetings, that the Miniſters there Preach the ſame Doctrine as we Preach in the Churches, and alſo reckon of the ſame eſſential Parts of Divine Worſhip to be there performed: But this will no more acquit them of Schiſm, than it could the *Donatiſts* and *Novatians* in the Primitive Church, who were Orthodox in all Fundamental Chriſtian Doctrine. If they differed from us in Doctrine, they would in proper ſpeaking be Hereticks, but we charge them with Schiſm and Separation, not for a different Doctrine, but for a different Church-communion, and their Schiſm is apparent in having diſtinct and ſeparate Aſſemblies under a diſtinct Species of Government and Governours, out of a diſlike of, and yielding no Obedience to our Church Government and Governours; nay aſſerting their own to be what Chriſt inſtituted, which implies it to be eſſential to a rightly conſtituted Church, and then the Eſtabliſhed Church cannot be rightly conſtituted, nor of Chriſt's Inſtitution, and form-

ing new Churches with different Modes of Divine Worſhip, both in Prayers, Sacraments, and other Ordinances, as if ours was naught, and by all means ſeeking to draw away the Church's Members, which manifeſtly ſhews that they do not own the Church's Members as their own, nor look upon themſelves as one Body with the Church, nor as any Members thereof. The conſequence of all which is ſo bad as nothing can be worſe, *viz.)* Chriſtians living together in the ſame Kingdom, City, Pariſh, Town, and Neighbourhood, nay in the ſame Family, refuſing to worſhip the ſame God in the ſame way, or in the ſame Aſſemblies, with bitter Envyings, Animoſities and Contentions, Parents with Children, and Children with Parents, Husbands with Wives, and Wives with Husbands, Neighbour with Neighbour, all of them (as they think) with an Holy Zeal for the Honour and Reputation of their ſeveral Churches, being rival with, and oppoſite to the one Eſtabliſhed, National Church, although this be acknowledged by their own moſt eminent Authors a Sound and Orthodox part of the Catholick Church; yea, and more valuable than any Church in the World. In one Word, They cannot be on all theſe accounts one Church, with the Eſtabliſhed National Church, and then, What can they be but Separate Churches? A Man may as well ſay, That a Monarchy, an Ariſtocracy, and a Democracy, if they could have place in any one Nation, with their diſtinct Governors, Subjects and Laws, being at continual War and Enmity with each other, are ſtill but one Kingdom, as af-

firm or believe, that the Presbyterian Churches are one with the Eſtabliſhed National Church, becauſe tolerated in the Nation, and therefore Separate Churches they are, and muſt be, and ſuch they cannot be from ſo Sound and Orthodox a part of the Catholick Church, as the Church of *England* is really, and is confeſſed by the moſt eminent amongſt themſelves, without the horrible guilt of Schiſm. Be it ſo then (may ſome ſay) mean while it appears here are ſad Diviſions in the midſt of us; and then another Queſtion may be put very conveniently, which followeth.

Queſt. XIII. May not a good Chriſtian ſafely ſuſpend his Communion with the particular Church he lives in, or is it not beſt for him to do ſo, becauſe of the woful Diviſions therein?

Anſ. In anſwer to this, it muſt be granted firſt, That if a Chriſtian ſhould travel into a ſtrange Countrey, and there find a company of Chriſtians divided into ſeveral Parties, Factions and Communions, Diviſions and Subdiviſions, each damning other, and refuſing each other's Communion: In this caſe, it will be fitting for a good Chriſtian to ſuſpend Communion with all the Parties, till he can inform himſelf with the State of the Controverſies amongſt them, and till he can by all needful helps be able to judge aright, which of them be the Schiſmaticks: But then, as ſoon as he can diſcern this, it will

be his duty, as a Member of the Catholick Church, to joyn himſelf to the Sound and Orthodox, if he can underſtand their Language. But this is far from being the caſe of the conſtant Inhabitants of any Place or Country where a Schiſm is, and hath been a long time. For in this caſe, If any could excuſe himſelf from all Church-communion, becauſe of the Diviſions in it, he might upon the ſame account live in a Sceptical Suſpenſion of all Church-communion all the days of his Life. And this bad conſequence muſt with great reaſon be taken ſpecial notice of, becauſe we have in our Churches that practiſe this, though perhaps without any other Principle beſides a ſottiſh, worldly, or arrantly prophane Diſpoſition, having no care of their precious Souls; and were it but for their ſakes, this ſort of reaſoning for ſuſpending all Church-communion, during the Diviſions in a Church, ſo as not to reſort to Church Aſſemblies, either to hear God's Word, or to joyn with their Chriſtian Brethren in Prayers, or receiving the Lord's Supper, deſerve the abhorrence of all ſober and ſerious Men, as it is the ready way to caſt off all Religion. It is not to be mentioned without Tears, how many we have in our Pariſhes, that lurk in their Houſes, or in the Ale-houſes every Lord's Day (if not ſtill worſe imployed, even hunting to make a prey of their Neighbour's Goods) when they ſhould be with them ſerving God, and learning their Duty to God and Man in the Church, who cannot be diſcerned to be other than Atheiſts by any External Acts of Religion which they perform. Certainly it concerns

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all conſcientious Miniſters to commend it to their Church Wardens, to obſerve and preſent this ſort of ungodly Men to their reſpective Ordinaries, in order to their Reformation, as they will avoid the horrible guilt of Perjury, and not damn their own Souls, for want of care and conſcience to endeavour others amendment; and that being done, if thoſe Perſons prove incorrigible, we muſt with Tears leave them to the juſtice of God.

But to come to the merit of the pretended reaſon for a Mans ſuſpending all Church-communion, becauſe of ſo many Diviſions, it is, I affirm, juſt ſuch a reaſon for this, as the different Opinions there are in Religion at large, is for arrant Scepticiſm and Infidelity: for into this Atheiſtical Reſolution do ſome Men argue themſelves, That becauſe there are ſo many Religions in the World, and particularly ſo many Sects among Chriſtians; therefore they for their parts will be of no Religion at all. The reaſon is as good there, as in the preſent caſe, that Men will be of no Church and of no Communion, becauſe there be ſo many Churches, and ſo many oppoſite Communions. But in truth, it is no good reaſon in either caſe; for as it is poſſible for any conſiderate Man to diſcern which is the true amongſt the many contrary Religions in the World, ſo is it alike poſſible for any to diſcover, which of the divided Communions is a ſound Member of the Catholick Church, how different ſoever Mens perſuaſions be concerning them; and if it be poſſible, then is it neceſſary, and no leſs than duty; for it is the Apoſtle's Golden Rule,

* 1 Thel. 5. 21. * *Prove all things, Hold faſt that which is good.* There is one of the *London* Caſes, Intituled, *A Perſuaſion to an ingenious Tryal of Opinions in Religion, that deſerves ſuch Mens ſerious peruſal.* At preſent I only offer this Apoſtolical Precept, which as it injoyns a proving of all things, ſo an holding faſt that which is good when we have found it. It is a Chriſtian's indiſpenſable Duty to maintain, and hold faſt his Communion ſtedfaſtly in that particular Church he lives in, after he be ſatisfied that it is a Sound and Orthodox part of the Catholick Church, or when he in it diſcerns nothing to the contrary, and for ſo doing, we have the example of the firſt Chriſtians in the firſt formed Church after the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt,

† Acts 2. 42. † Who *continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtle's Doctrine, Fellowſhip, breaking of Bread, and Prayers.* And what Man will doubt that all thoſe that were afterwards converted to Chriſtianity, and were by Baptiſm added to the Church,

‖ Verſ. 47. ‖ did the ſame? And obſerve, This they did, notwithſtanding the Diviſions of that time; for it is evident in the Apoſtle's Epiſtles to the Churches, that there were Separatiſts and Separations even in the Apoſtle's times, notwithſtanding their Infallibility and miraculous Powers, which muſt neceſſarily inhance their Authority. There was even then thoſe that ſet up for themſelves, and had Conventicles, drawing Diſciples after them.

And

And that diverſe did ſee in ſucceeding times, is evident in the Records of the Primitive Churches, and St. *Paul* foretold it would always be ſo; * *There muſt be Hereſies,* (the Original Word may well enough be tranſlated Separations) *that they that are approved may be made manifeſt.* From whence I infer, That in this caſe Diviſions or Separations can excuſe Men from external, actual Church communion, in Divine Ordinances, or can juſtify their ſuſpending it; then neither ever was ſuch Communion a Duty, or if it was ſo ſome while, yet it was never likely to be ſo long; for the Church of God was never ſo happy as to be perfectly free from Hereſies, Schiſms, or Diviſions, nor ever will be while the World laſts.

* 1 Cor. 11. 19.

Now if any well-meaning Country Man would know what he (ſimple as he is) muſt do in this caſe, how he may ſettle his mind and walk ſafely. There is one plain Rule ſufficient to guide and direct him, *viz.* in what Place, Nation, or Countrey ſoever, there is a Church eſtabliſhed by lawful Authority, in whoſe conſtitution or worſhip is no ſinful thing required which is forbidden by God, and wherein he for his part can ſee none; with that Church he is in duty bound to hold Communion with his Neighbour Fellow Chriſtians, and not with any oppoſite Sect or Party that ſeparates from it; and there is this good reaſon for this, that the advantage always is on the ſide of lawful Authority, all private Chriſtians being by God's Law required to yield Subjection and Obedience: and though no human Law,

Authority, or publick Eſtabliſhment can juſtify a ſinful Communion, yet to ſeparate from, or ſuſpend with an Eſtabliſhed, National Church, which cannot be proved to impoſe any ſinful term of Communion, is both ſinful, as a Diſobedience to lawful Authority, and alſo as a Schiſm, or what countenanceth, encourageth, upholdeth, promoteth, abetteth, or furthereth a Schiſm from the Catholick Church, whereof that Eſtabliſhed, National Church is a Sound and Orthodox Part and Member.

Now this pretence of a ſuſpending all Church-communion for the ſake of Diviſions being thus reproved and cleared of, it is in the next place obſervable what the manner of ſome is, who would be thought to be very ſerious in their care for their Souls, which is, one day to communicate with the Church of *England*, another day with a Separate Church or Conventicle, nay perhaps the ſame day with both; and ſome come to Church ſometimes meerly becauſe of foul Weather, and the Conventicle is at a greater diſtance, which ſignifies that they do not look upon themſelves as fixed Members of either Church or Conventicle, with either of which they hold no more conſtant Communion than ſo; to inform theſe Perſons better therefore in their unqueſtioned Duty ſhall follow the next two or three Queſtions.

Queſt. XIV. Can nothing leſs than ſome ſinful terms of Communion, impoſed by the Eſtabliſhed Church, juſtify Mens ſeparating from

from it, or from its ſtated ſolemn Aſſemblies?

Anſ. In what caſes Separation from theſe is warrantable, and not only no Sin, but a neceſſary Duty is expreſſed in my Preface, *viz.* in caſe of Idolatry, Hereſie, or falſe Doctrine, or Tyranny, or uſurping Dominion over Mens conſciences, that is, in creating new Articles of Faith, or in impoſing things indifferent as meritorious of, or as neceſſary to Salvation. Such ſinful terms of Church-communion as theſe, do doubtleſs make it the Duty of all good Chriſtians to ſeparate from, and to forſake any Church's Communion; and this we Proteſtants plead for our Neceſſity and Duty of ſeparating from the Church of *Rome*, by reforming our ſelves after we had long been in a more than Egyptian Bondage to it. But that nothing leſs than ſuch ſinful Terms or Conditions of Communion, being impoſed by an Eſtabliſhed Church, can acquit Men of the horrid guilt of Schiſm, if they ſeparate from it, is evident, becauſe all Chriſtians indiſpenſable Duty is to endeavour, at the leaſt to endeavour, *to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*: * But no Man can be ſaid ſo much as to endeavour this, who ſeparates from a Church without a juſt cauſe, that is, when there is no ſuch ſinful condition of Communion impoſed; and the Texts are without number that injoyn Chriſtian's Unity, Unanimity, Likemindedneſs, Love, Peace, and Chari-

*Eph. 4. 3.

ty particularly, * to *follow peace with all Men*, and † *the things that make for peace*, and if it be poſſible, and as much as lieth in them, to live peaceably with all Men, and ſurely much more with the Church of God. But they muſt be far from following peace, *and the things that make for peace*, and living peaceably with the Church, and with their Fellow-Members in it, as far as is poſſible, and as much as lyeth in them, who ſeparate from them when they may hold Communion with them without Sin. And further, If Chriſtians were not in Duty bound to communicate with the Church they live in, when it is poſſible, that is, when they need not Sin in communicating, neither might there be no end of Separations, nor would Catholick Unity, or Church-communion be either poſſible or practicable. There would be no bounds nor limits to the levity or ungovernableneſs of Dividers, or ſuch as have an itch to follow them that make Diviſions, who might then divide and ſubdivide, and model new Churches and new Communions as they pleaſe, which hath been the memorable, ſad experience of the poor Church of *England*, in the late Times of Anarchy and Confuſion by that bloody Civil War, which the Sectaries waged againſt, and which ended in the execrable Murther of the beſt of Engliſh Monarchs.

* Heb. 12. 14.

† Rom. 14. 18, 19.

Queſt.

Queſt. XV. Are they then in duty bound to communicate conſtantly with the Church of *England*, who are its natural Members, and know of no ſinful thing required of them in holding in its Communion, as appears by their actual communicating with it, without ſcruple when they pleaſe?

Anſ. They are certainly ſo, if they will walk by any juſt meaſures of Catholick Unity, or Church communion; for every Chriſtian Man and Woman is by Baptiſm as fixt a Member of the whole Catholick Church of Chriſt, as he or ſhe is a fixt Chriſtian, and conſequently of every Sound and Orthodox part of the Catholick Church wherever he finds it, but more eſpecially therefore of that Church where he or ſhe lives, becauſe there can be no other way imagined of maintaining a firm Communion with the Catholick Church, but by an orderly performing the particular Acts, Offices and Exerciſes of Church-communion in ſome particular Church, that is a Sound and Orthodox part of the Church Catholick: for the Chriſtians being obliged to thoſe Acts and Exerciſes of Church-communion, reſults from his Church Memberſhip, and from his Obligation to Catholick communion; and the conſequence of this muſt be, that a Chriſtian's Church communion muſt be as fixed as his Church-Memberſhip; for a fix'd Member is bound to a fix'd Communion, both with the Church Catholick and particular, where-

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of he or ſhe is a fix'd Member. Indeed, for Man to withdraw his Communion from that p ticular Church where he lives, knowing no Sin in for which he ſhould withdraw his Communi from it more than any other Orthodox part the Catholick Church, and having all alo both owned his Relation to it as its Memb and alſo communicated with it freely, is withdraw his Communion from the Catholi Church too, becauſe the Catholick Church is b one Body all the World over, and therefore t Communion with it is likewiſe but One; ſo th he that is not a fix'd Member of that part of t Catholick Church where he hath his abode, it be Sound and Orthodox, is no fix'd Memb neither of the Catholick Church; and he th communicates not with that particular Chur that is Orthodox, communicates not neither wi the Catholick Church; for whoſoever breaks o of the Unity of the Parts, or divides himſelf fro any of the Parts, he makes a diviſion in, a breaks out of the Unity of the whole Body.

This may ſerve for a ſufficient Reſolution the caſe to any reaſonable Man: But I proſe my ſelf to be here in a great ſtrait, notwitl ſtanding it is ſo; for on the one hand, conſide ing what ſort of Perſons I have to do with, think it neceſſary to apply my ſelf to them i another way of Diſcourſe; and on the oth hand, I can neither be ſo briet as I deſire to b nor avoid Repetitions of what hath been ſa more than once, if I ſpeak what is needful: b if I err in either of theſe kinds, I muſt rely o the Reader's candour for his pardon of a fault

cannot help. Now to ſuch Perſons as are unconſtant and unfix'd in holding Communion with the Church of *England*, I would ſay this, Let them anſwer one Queſtion, which is very fit to be put unto their conſciences, *viz.* Is it a Sound and Orthodox Church, or is it not?

1. If it be not, it behoves them to ſhew where the fault or failure lies, and they cannot ſay it is in the Church's Doctrine; for the diſſenting Teachers have lately Subſcribed to all its Doctrinal Articles, and if we may give credence to thoſe that go to hear them, they themſelves Preach the ſame Doctrine that we Preach (for this they moſtwhat affirm in excuſe of going to hear them) ſo that if their Doctrine be Sound and Orthodox, ſo muſt ours be too; where then is the fault? To this they give different Anſwers, of which I think it convenient to give ſome ſhort Strictures. A few Ceremonies (ſay ſome.) We could all like well enough of the Church of *England* but for her Ceremonies. Now, alas, examine this ſtrictly, and they are no more, for any thing can be found in them after many ſolemn Diſputes about them, than indifferent things in no wiſe forbidden, no more than they are commanded by God, and only here required for Decencies ſake, and hugely contributing to Edification; the ſame, or their Equivalents being uſed in all other Reformed Churches. But O, your Common-Prayers (ſay others) diſguſt us, nay even your very Forms of Prayer, or your praying by a Form, unto which all Miniſters are bound, and thereby is the Spirit ſtinted in them; and when this is ſearch'd into, it is very apparent we have

for this the example of the Jewiſh Church firſt, who had from God himſelf particular Orders in their ſeveral Miniſtrations. But if that will not digeſt, nor yet any Examples of the Saints in the Old Teſtament, we have to produce that of our Lord himſelf, himſelf both making uſe of Forms of Prayer in the Garden, and out of the Pſalms upon the Croſs; yea, though he had the Spirit without meaſure; and alſo preſcribing a Form of Prayer to his Diſciples, and that after the example of *John*, who had taught one to his Diſciples ſuitable to his Miniſtry; nay, and that Form preſcribed by our Saviour, being a Collection of Petitions out of ſeveral Forms, uſed in the Jewiſh Church (as our Authors prove) beſides which, we have the Teſtimony of many the moſt eminent Proteſtants in Foreign Churches, and thoſe of Presbyterian Communions, as alſo of the Diſſenters of chiefeſt note, highly commending both Forms of Prayer for the Publick Service, and alſo our Engliſh Prayers particularly, even admiring our Liturgy (ſome of them) as if compoſed by ſome extraordinary aſſiſtance, or even inſpiration. We alſo plead the impoſſibility of preſerving Order and Unity in any Church without a ſtated Liturgy, neither can the Publick Prayers be perfect without it, ſo as to anſwer all the neceſſities of the People, and of the whole Church of God; nor can it be hoped they ſhould be performed with that gravity and ſoundneſs that becomes them, or without Tautologies, and vain Repetitions, and diverſe Errors, even to the making God's ſolemn Worſhip ridiculous, if every Miniſter be left at large to his own fancy and weakneſs in their management. But

But to cut the matter ſhort, whether it be remonies, or our Common-Prayers, or Forms Prayer, or whatever elſe that is found fault th, and inclines this or that Man to diſlike r Church, and fancy a Separate Meeting bet-; it hath been ſufficiently made out by our thors, and particularly in the *London* Caſes, at they are no other than what the Primitive urches uſed, than what our Holy Martyrs f precious Memory) both ordered and uſed, an what (or their Equivalents) are at this day ed in all the Reformed Churches, ſo that no an can diſlike our Church's Communion up- any alledgments hitherto made againſt it, ſo to ſeparate from it; but he muſt upon the ne account have ſeparated from the Primitive hurches, had he lived in any of them, from e Bleſſed Martyrs, who not only ſerved God the ſame way, but alſo preſcribed it, and from hom we have it by Succeſſion, and he muſt be Separatiſt from any other Proteſtant Church's ommunion, if Providence ſhould remove his abitation into any of them, and what think- g ſerious Chriſtian will eſpouſe or walk by ſuch eaſures of Church-communion, as will neceſ- rily render him a Separatiſt in all the Churches God, and indeed from the whole Catholick hurch throughout the World? But to come the other part of the Dilemma.

2. If this be a Sound and Orthodox Church, ncerning which, I need not perhaps (recol- ting my ſelf) argue at all the generality of ch as go to the Separate Meetings, being ſuch we know to have without ſcruple, held Com-

muni-

munion with the Church of *England*, whil
Laws obliged them to it; nay, and who ſt
this day do it in moſt parts of our Holy O
when they pleaſe: And if we muſt in Ch
believe them ſo tender of conſcience, that
will by no means ſo much as once do what
think to be really ſinful, or do but ſuſpe
be ſinful. This muſt be an Argument the
never anſwer, That they have no ſinful thir
lay to this Church's charge; and then, as
love their Souls, they are earneſtly deſire
conſider how they will juſtify their unconſt
in an Apoſtacy from its Communion.

Let ſuch Perſons take *Paul's* Golden A
riſm * into conſideration, *Happy is the Man that condemneth not himſelf in that which he alloweth.* The inverſion whereof holds good. Unhappy is the Man that allo
himſelf in that which he condemneth. T
unconſtant Communicants allow the Ch
of *England* as a Church, with which they can
fully communicate, without fear of ſinning the
or elſe why do they it at all? And they implic
condemn its Communion as ſinful, in withd
ing and breaking out from it, becauſe there mu
ſomething ſinful in its Communion, or elſe
cannot juſtify their not communicating wit
ſo that they can never overcome this Dilem
viz. they either ſin whenever they commun
with us: And why then do they it ſometi
or elſe they ſin whenever they do not comm
cate with us, by joyning in a Separate Mee
and the conſequence is neceſſary, becauſe Se

* Rom. 22.

on is always either a Duty or a Sin. A Duty, Church-communion be idolatrous or ſinful, a n if it be not ſo; and ſo on the other hand mmunicating is either a Sin or a Duty. A n, if the Communion be ſinful, or a Duty, the Communion be lawful and not ſinful; and ien, if it be a Duty to communicate, it muſt : a Sin of Omiſſion, that is, a neglect of a ne-ſſary Duty, or a not doing what we ought to o, if we do not communicate. In ſhort, with-ut doubt, it is every Chriſtian Man's Duty to mmunicate with the Church he lives in, if he n do it lawfully; and if Mens conſciences will ffer them to do it ſometimes, they are bound o do it always, for nothing can juſtify their not oing that always which they can do ſometimes vithout ſcruple. Their doing it ſometimes is n implicite allowing it, and their not doing it lways, eſpecially if they joyn in oppoſite Com-nunions, is an implicite condemning it; ſo that ere is an allowing themſelves in what they con-emn, and a condemning themſelves in what hey allow beyond all contradiction, and to a-oid a ſelf-condemnation in the one, or in the o-her is impoſſible.

All which will be further evident by a proper Anſwer to the next Queſtion, which will be ſo ear a-kin to this laſt at the firſt view, that an Apology may ſeem needful for making them two liſtinct Queſtions. But there is this good rea-on for it, *viz.* the great number of Perſons, who being profeſſed Members of the Church of *England*, and pretending no ſcruple againſt its Communion, do yet indifferently reſort, and

(as

(as it were) blindfold go to the Separate Meetings, without the leaſt ſenſe or conſideration of the ſin or miſchief of doing ſo, for whoſe better Information therefore, I think it neceſſary to make this diſtinct Inquiry.

Queſt. XVI. May not a good Chriſtian lawfully communicate with diſtinct ſeparate Churches or Meetings, who yet are minded to hold Communion with the Eſtabliſhed Church for the main?

Anſ. No Man can do this that will guide himſelf either by Scripture Precept or Preſident, or by any ſound and ancient Rule of Catholick Unity or Church-communion, or by the Dictates of true reaſon.

In this doth the changeableneſs of the Presbyterians ſeem very ſcandalous; for after many confeſſions of the moſt eminent amongſt them in diverſe of their Books, that the Church of *England* is a true and orthodox Church, and after the generality of them, communicating with it till the late Royal Indulgences, and eſpecially till the late Act of Toleration, their very Teachers giving the People their own example for it, and pronouncing Schiſm and Separation to be a damnable Sin, wherein as I have ſaid, they have left themſelves ſelf condemned in not doing that for the Church's Unity and Peace, which they have again and again, both in print and practice confeſſed they can do without Sin, and in doing that now which they have alike confeſſed to be a damnable Sin, and but for this reaſon, there is no great heed to be taken of what they do,

or

ve done, as to communicating, or not
unicating, ſeeing we daily experience them
ſe in their Principles, as to Catholick Unity
urch-communion; for after all this that I
ere expreſſed, the whole Sect is at this day
fallen into the Independents courſe of
ing Churches, and ſetting up Altar againſt
holding their Separate Meetings in com-
n with the Church's ſolemn Aſſemblies, (a
that they formerly branded with the guilt
vnright Schiſm,) which yet is not all, for
ı is a much more marvellous prevaricati-
ome of them I find have of late given a
ıonourable Character of the Schiſmatical
ce of profeſſed Church-members, and Schiſ-
l communicating with, and joyning to
Separate Meetings as the right Catholick

A very ſtrange thing, that any Perſons
ding to Senſe, Religion and Conſcience,
have the forehead to offer ſuch a Notion
Chriſtian World: For what will the con-
ce of this be leſs than this, not only to
it an indifferent matter, with what Party
t Orthodox Chriſtians communicate as
ſancy prompts them; but even a ſort
iſtian Duty to communicate freely with
hes of all Communions, and a principle
iſm for any one to be ſtanch, refuſing to
unicate with whatever Schiſmatical Bro-
ods ſhall ſet up for themſelves, in oppoſi-
ı an Orthodox Church?

I now let every one open his Eyes, and ſee
ontrary this pretended Catholick Spirit is
ı Holy Scriptures, both Precepts and

Precedents; and as for Holy Scripture Precepts, it would ſwell this Diſcourſe too much to recite the words at large which are quoted in the Margin, * intermixed with variety of Promiſes of the Unity of Chriſt's Church, and particularly that of the Gentiles, every promiſe implying a Precept, and our Duty; and one would think the very reading them, without any Expoſitions upon, or Arguings from them, ſhould mortify all Inclinations in all Perſons that will make God's Word their rule and guide, to have any thing to do with Dividers or Diviſions: and indeed, were there no more in all God's Book but thoſe two Texts, *Eph.* 4. 3. *Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, and *Rom.* 16. 17. *Mark them which cauſe diviſions among you and avoid them*, (manifeſtly implying a prohibition of communicating with or following them) I ſhould think them ſufficient to rectify all conſcientious Perſons in this matter.

* Zech. 14. 9. Ezek. 34. 23. and 37. 23, 24. Jer. 32. 39. Joh. 17. 21. and 11. 52. 2 Cor. 11. 2. 1 Cor. 1. 10. 12, and 3. 3. 4, 10, and 12. 3. 12, 13, 22, 23, and 13. 1. 2, 3. Rom. 15. 56. and 16. 17, 18. Phil. 1. 2. Eph. 1. 2, &c. 1 Theſ. 5. 12, 13. Tit. 3. 10.

And for Scripture Precedents, I muſt alſo for brevities ſake refer thoſe in the Margin † to the Reader's peruſal, contenting my ſelf with one

† Acts 1. 14. and 2. 1. 22, and 4. 24, 32. and 5. 12, and 15. 23, with divers others.

only

y inſtance, often mentioned before St. *Peter's* nverts in the ſecond of the *Acts*, who were firſt formed Church after the deſcent of the ly Ghoſt, and are here ſet for an Example to ucceeding Churches, *That they continued ſted-ly in the Apoſtle's Doctrine, and Fellowſhip, breaking of Bread, and Prayers*; which they did likewiſe (we may in reaſon believe) who e afterwards converted and baptized, being eby added to the Church, even as many as uld be ſaved; in the ſame Fellowſhip did they continue, and who can imagine that they mmunicated with other Fellowſhips, that ht ſet up different from, or much more oppo-to that Fellowſhip? and he muſt verily be at e out of his reaſon and ſenſes, that being in Church of *England's* Fellowſhip or Commu-n will avow his continuing ſtedfaſtly therein, o doth not limit himſelf to it as the Church's d Member, but allows himſelf to joyn with rate and oppoſite Churches and Communi-

o far is this from the Scripture Catholick Spi-hat it may very reaſonably be parallell'd with *Iſraelites* halting betwixt l and *Baal*, * and all Perſons ty of it, may be ranked with *ames's* wavering and double-ded Men, † of whom he ſaith, *hat wavereth, is as the wave e Sea, driven with the wind, oſſed*; and a double minded Man is unſta-in all his ways. But this is far ſhort of that h right reaſon, as well as Scripture and

* 1 Kin. 8. 21.

† Jam. 1. 6, 7.

is, as becometh Chriſtians, *Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit*, which muſt be an Unity in Spiritual Things, *in the Bond of Peace*, as alſo to mark thoſe that cauſe diviſions, and to avoid them.

3. As for Church-memberſhip in a particular Church where a Man lives, in contradiſtinction to the whole Catholick Church throughout the whole World, the true notion thereof, reſpects the Diſcipline and Government of that Church, that is, a Chriſtian's being under the immediate care, inſpection, inſtruction, and government of the Biſhops and Paſtors in conjunction with the Biſhops of that Church. Now this Government, and theſe Governours in the Church of *England*, being the ſame that the Apoſtles ſettled in all the Churches which they planted, and which our Authors have proved to be in all the Primitive Churches until *Calvin*'s time, which was fifteen hundred at the leaſt; no Man can hold Communion with ſuch Separate Churches, as refuſe ſubjection to thoſe Biſhops and Paſtors, and ſet up Antibiſhops and other Paſtors againſt them, that owns his Church-memberſhip of, or his Church-communion with the Church of *England*, without being as guilty of Schiſm from it, as any Perſons are guilty of Sedition or Rebellion in the ſtate, that joyn with, or adhere to them, who uſurp upon, or oppoſe their rightful Sovereign, or thoſe that be in Authority under him, for the caſe is equivalent in both. And further

4. The abſurdity and unreaſonableneſs of this indifferent communicating with both the Eſtabliſhed

bliſhed Church, and with Separate Meetings, will be very evident by a true ſtating the caſe betwixt them, which is this: There are Churches new formed within the Eſtabliſhed Church, and yet profeſſed Adverſaries to it; Churches gathered out of the National Church, that conſiſt of its natural Members (which hath been always accounted a plain Schiſm in all Orthodox Churches) nor can the Members of ſuch Separate Churches be eſteemed Members of the Eſtabliſhed Church, no nor Members of each other, any more than they can of the Church Catholick, whereof the Eſtabliſhed Church from which they divide, is a Sound and Orthodox part; for by ſuch Separation they make the Catholick Church many Bodies, whereas it is by Chriſt's Inſtitution but one Body. They even divide Chriſtians in the ſame Kingdom, Pariſh, Neighbourhood, nay Family, gathering them into ſeparate Brotherhoods and Communions, ſo as to refuſe to ſerve the ſame God in the ſame Aſſemblies, or in the ſame way, of which, Who can make leſs than a groſs Schiſm, and ſuch a Diviſion as the Apoſtle injoyns Chriſtians to avoid, and therefore not to joyn to, or communicate with? This if any do, what a Sin it will be to them, will appear in the next conſideration, *viz.*)

5. Either the Eſtabliſhed Church, or the Separate, muſt unavoidably be in the wrong, the one of them muſt be culpable: The Church eſtabliſhed muſt be ſo, if the terms of Communion with it be ſinful; or the Separate Churches muſt be ſo, if there be no juſt cauſe for Separa-

tion, by reaſon of ſome ſinful thing impoſed on them; it is impoſſible for both of them to be in the right. Men muſt of neceſſity allow the one, and condemn the other, and therefore cannot be Members of them both, ſeeing nothing can juſtify a Separation from an Eſtabliſhed, National Church but this, that a good Chriſtian cannot communicate with it without Sin, by reaſon of ſome ſinful terms of Communion impoſed by it. I muſt ſay it again and again, That either the Church of *England* is guilty of this, and then it is no ſound part of the Catholick Church, and then Separation will be a Duty, and Separatiſts are in the right, and no Man that cares for his Soul can lawfully communicate with it at all; or elſe it hath no ſuch ſinful term of Communion, and then it is a ſound part of the Catholick Church, and conſequently Separation muſt be a Sin, and to joyn with Separatiſts will be a Sin, and Separate Churches will prove falſe Churches, or rather none at all: For I think it a great certainty, That Separation is a Sin, where Communion is no Sin, and he Sins that ſeparates from an Orthodox Church, with which he can without Sin communicate, and if ſo, then will the Dilemma be unanſwerable by ſuch as reſort to Separate Meetings, and yet are in Communion with the Church of *England*. They either ſin conſtantly in the Church's Communion; and then, Why do they continue in it? Or they ſin as often as they communicate with thoſe that ſeparate from it; in one or other of them they condemn themſelves of grievous Sin.

O how

O how do the Hearts of good Men bleed thin them, to ſee that Church, which all unejudiced Obſervers of other Reformed Church- and their Conſtitutions have pronounced to the pureſt, and even the great Bulwark ainſt Popery, moſt wofully divided by the ſeral Sects, Parties and Factions in its boſom, of them endeavouring all they can to ſubvert d undermine it, and let them anſwer it to eir own conſciences if they can; how they can thout blame communicate with thoſe Parties at endeavour the ruin of that Church, with ich they are in Communion, being unable to any thing why they ſhould not be ſo. Such en muſt be Members of one of the Communis; for it is abſurd to perform Acts of Commun, Hearing, Praying, and receiving the Lord's pper in either of them, without owning a reion to either of the Aſſemblies, ours or theirs; auſe it is upon the account of Church-memſhip, that it is any Chriſtian's Duty to hold ternal, actual Communion with a Church in ſe Holy Offices. Now a Man cannot be reed as a Member to divided Parties; for then will be a Member of Bodies ſeparate from, d oppoſite to each other: For the Church tabliſhed is one Body, and a Separate Church nother Body, and a ſecond Separate Church nother Body, and all Separate Churches are a ſtate of oppoſition to the eſtabliſhed Church, ng under different Governments and Gover-s, having different Modes of Divine Worſhip, ving on different Deſigns, ſo that whoſoever ds Communion in Holy Offices with them

both

both, no leſs can be made of it, than that he either really is, or at leaſt apparently acts as a Member of oppoſite Bodies, and then let it be thought of, how bad and ſhameful a conſequence there will be of that, which any blind Man may ſee, *viz.* that a Man is, and acts contrary to himſelf, and muſt be wrong in the one, or in the other, indeed no better than a Schiſmatick, or at leaſt a Partaker with them that are Schiſmaticks: And there is this plain reaſon for it, That (as all agree) either the Church of *England* is Schiſmatical in impoſing ſome ſinful term of Communion, or they that divide from the Church of *England* are Schiſmaticks in ſeparating from it without a cauſe. To all which, I add,

7. Such changeable communicating with both theſe cannot conſiſt with that near and dear Relation that there is, and by all good order ought to be, between a Church Miniſter and his People, for their Duties are reciprocal: If it be the Miniſter's Duty to miniſter to a particular People, then ought that People (Mr. *Hildersham* ſaith, by Chriſt's Ordinance, as well as by the Laws of the Church and State) to attend and joyn with him in his Miniſtration: which relative Duties can never conſiſt with any Perſons heaping up Teachers to gratify itching Ears to himſelf, no nor with his countenancing any Intruders into their proper Miniſter's care. In a word, it is contrary to all ſound Rules and Orders of Church-communion.

To conclude this Anſwer, the matter will come to this iſſue: If Schiſm be ſo innocent a thing

ng, that there is no harm nor ſin in it; nay, as ſome of late have ſenſeleſly affirmed) it ify a true Catholick Spirit, when a Man is ſo ſtrait-laced, but that he can freely com-nicate with any Communion, that of the abliſhed Church, or that of a Separate urch, oppoſite to the Eſtabliſhed Church, ng a Sound and Orthodox part of the Catho-c Church, then let who will go, where they l, to Separate Meetings, no Man blaming m for it. But be it known mean while to all h Perſons, That if they be reſolved up-it, they muſt bid adieu to all the nu-rous Scripture-Precepts of Unity, Unani-ty, Brotherly Love, Charity and Peace h all their Fellow-members, and with the urch of God: They muſt bid adieu to the oſtle's Doctrine, forbidding and damning all iſms, Diviſions and Separations from that urch, to which they ſhall be added, as many ſhall be ſaved. They muſt bid adieu to the ctrine and Diſcipline of the Primitive Church; , and of the whole Chriſtian Church from Apoſtle's times to this day, yea, and to the nſtitutions of all the Reformed Churches as ll as ours, being all alike obnoxious to the ſenter's Objections, and being all as ſevere ſurers of Schiſm and Schiſmaticks; whether niſters or private Chriſtians, of all cauſeleſs arations and obſtinate Separatiſts as this urch of ours ever was. They muſt, inſtead their Church-memberſhip, jump into a Facti-and muſt be ſelf condemned in it too. They uſt break through that near Relation wherein

they

they ſtand to their own proper Paſtor or Miniſter: and thus doing, if Schiſm be a damnable Sin (as even the Diſſenters themſelves have both Preached and Printed) and it it be in St. *Paul's* Catalogue of *the Works of the Fleſh*, * ſo that it will damn Men as well as *Adultery*, *Fornication*, *Uncleanneſs*, *Idolatry*, *Witchcraft*, &c. for they that live in this as well as them, *ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*; and finally, if it be carnality, as the ſame Apoſtle makes it †, *and to be carnally minded is Death* ‖; Then (to ſay the leaſt of it) certainly it is extreamly dangerous for any to reſort to Separate Churches or Meetings, whereby they muſt become arrant Schiſmaticks, or at leaſt be Partakers with them that are ſo, if there be any in the Chriſtian World. But have ſuch as tread theſe perilous paths nothing to ſay for themſelves? Yes, and the ſame deſerves a fair examination, and them we commonly hear thus pleading for their thus prevaricating with God, and the Church of God.

* Gal. 5. 19, &c.

† 1 Cor. 3. 4.

‖ Rom. 8. 7.

It is true enough, That they for their part have nothing to ſay why the Church of *England* ſhould not be accounted a ſound and orthodox Church, and from thence they have been hitherto ſatisfied with her Communion, while they could have no better: But they believe now, the Ordinances of Chriſt are purer in the Meetings than in the Pariſh Churches. Now to rectify Men in this, let that be my next Inquiry.

Queſt.

Queſt. XVII. May not we go to Separate Meetings in hopes of having Chriſt's Ordinances purer or more purely adminiſtred, than we can have them in the Church of *England*'s publick Aſſemblies?

Anſ. It is needleſs to multiply Words after ſuch ample Satisfaction hath been offered to this Objection by our Learned Divines, and therefore my Anſwer to this ſhall in ſhort be; that it is meer cant to talk of purer Ordinances in our caſe, as any ſober Man may judge by a naked repreſentation of the thing: For by Ordinances here, muſt be meant the Word, the Sacraments and Prayer, and to have them pure, (as I have all along ſuppoſed) is eſſential to a true and orthodox Church, that is a ſound part of the Catholick Church, as ours is acknowledged to be. Now I will ask any Man what purer Ordinances or Adminiſtration of Ordinances they would deſire than thoſe of our Saviour's own Inſtitution, rightly adminiſtred according to his Order and their firſt Inſtitution, without any ſinful, idolatrous, or ſuperſtitious mixtures of human Invention, which will corrupt them, and make them unacceptable to God, and take away all hopes of his Bleſſing to go along with them? Let them tell if they can wherein the purity of the Ordinances conſiſts, but their conformity to their firſt Inſtitution, without any eſſential defects in, without any ſinful Additions to them: And in this ſenſe, we have the

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confeſſion of the moſt eminent Diſſenters, yea, and of all the Reformed Churches abroad, that we have Chriſt's Ordinances pure, or elſe our Church could not be a ſound and orthodox part of the Catholick Church, which hath been ſufficiently made good in anſwer to the ſixth Queſtion.

Beſides all which, They of the diſſenting Party who have without ſcruple held in Communion with our Church, while the Laws of Conformity were in force, and who (many of them) at this day communicate with us, when their humour or intereſt leads them to it, have precluded themſelves from complaining of any impurity in our Ordinances, if they know what they do, or have done, for elſe they muſt be culpable in joyning with us at all.

And laſtly, for that greater purity of Ordinances ſuppoſed to be in the Separate Meetings, it is very ſuſpicious to be a meer fancy; for upon due examination it will be found, they mean their being adminiſtred by ſome ſort of Perſons of this, or that Opinion, or Party whom they have in admiration, or in ſome new found way, beſides what can be found in their Inſtitution, and whoſoever they are that think the Ordinances will be more efficacious on ſuch account, they will be in great danger of a groſs ſuperſtition; in aſcribing the vertue of Divine Ordinances to either the ſeeming Holineſs of the Miniſters, or this or that particular mode of Adminiſtration that beſt pleaſeth their fancy, and not to Chriſt's Inſtitution (the Author of them) nor to his preſence with, or bleſſing upon them; for without doubt to theſe is the vertue and efficacy of Divine

e Ordinances to be aſcribed, and by no means their conforming to Mens fancies newly taken , never commanded by God, nor ever of uſe of late in the Church of God.

As for them who hitherto hold their ſtand in : Church of *England*'s Communion, let them ſs God for it, and never need they to be a- amed of it, the Doctrine thereof being built on the Prophets and Apoſtles, according to : Expoſitions given of them by the Ancient thers, the Diſcipline and Government thereof ily Apoſtolical in all its eſſential Parts; its Li- gy, an Extract out of, or a Collection of the ſt Primitive Forms (as is evident enough in ctor *Cumber's Companion to the Temple and to Altar*) all corrupt Additions and Abuſes of pery clearly caſt out: its Ceremonies but few, d thoſe it retains apparently conducing to de- ncy, order and increaſe of Piety, and in all re- ſts it is agreeable to, and in no wiſe contrary the Scriptures, and truly Catholick, according the Tradition of the four firſt general Coun- s, according to the antient Rules of Catholi- m (what hath been received of all the Churches ery where, and at all times:) And let all the eligions in the World be com- red together, and not one of em can more truly ſay with rtullian, than ours of the hurch of *England*, whether it : in Doctrine, Sacraments or overnment, We walk by that

Quod ab omnibus, quod ubique, quod ſemper receptum fuit.

In eâ regulâ incedimus

iam Eccleſia ab Apoſtolis, Apoſtoli à Chriſto, hriſtus à Deo accepit.

Rule

Rule which the Church received from the Apoſtles, the Apoſtles from Chriſt, and Chriſt from God: for there is no Church in the Chriſtian World can be found more conſonant to the Scriptures for Doctrines, or to the Primitive Examples for Government, aſcribing more Glory to God, or better ſerving Mens Salvation. In a word, no Church that better keeps the middle way between the extream of ſuperſtitious Popery and Tyranny, and the other extream of Slavery, and Fanatick Anarchy; and if any Man would have a purer Church or a better, let them ſeek it where they can find it, but that can they never, I believe, in any Chriſtian Nation under Heaven. Let us hear then what that is further, for which moſt of the common People pretend to prefer the Separate Meetings before the Church's Aſſemblies, which if it fail them, they muſt neceſſarily be at a great loſs in defending their going to joyn with them, and what they moſt what ſay for themſelves when reproved for it, is to be conſidered in the Anſwer to the next Queſtion.

Queſt. XVIII. May not a good Chriſtian in tenderneſs for his Soul go where he finds he can edify beſt? We think we find better Edification in the Separate Meetings, and why then may we not go to them?

Anſ. Let it be conſidered in the firſt place how unſound that Principle muſt neceſſarily be and even ſtark naught, which will naturally expoſe God's

God's Church to endleſs Diviſions, if Men be influenced by it in matter of Church-communion. All Sects (if they can be judges for themſelves) will pretend this. The Presbyterians will ſay, they have better Edification in their Meetings, and the Independents, the Anabaptiſts, and very Quakers will ſay the ſame; and as for the common People, they have ordinarily no certain Rule to judge by, but are altogether led by their humours, fancies, or opinions.

It is plain experience, that every Man will think he edifies moſt by what he likes beſt, and it can no more be hoped for, that they will all agree in this, than that they ſhall all alike love and like the ſame Diet. They will upon this account divide and ſubdivide without end or meaſure (as we had woful experience in the late times of Anarchy.) Surely the Peace and Unity of Chriſt's Church is too valuable to depend upon ſo looſe a principle as this may appear at firſt ſight to any ſober, ſerious and thinking Perſon; for never will Mankind come to that, to wit, to be of the ſame humour, opinion or judgment about decency, fitneſs, or conveniency in Divine Things, or even about better Edification.

It may indeed be confidently ſaid, That they who go to a Conventicle in hopes to edify better than they pretend they can do in the Churches, have no right underſtanding what Edification is. The Original Word * ſignifies building up, and is in Scripture primarily and principally applied to the Church as God's Houſe and Tem-

* οἰκοδομή.

ple, and it is only in a ſecondary and ſubordinate ſenſe, that it is applied to particular Chriſtians. Now as for the Church of God, it muſt be an odd way of building it up as an Houſe or Temple to divide and ſeparate its parts, each from other. Schiſms, Diviſions and Separations muſt needs prove bad Edifiers or Builders up.

I ſhall endeavour Brevity here all I can, but hope to be excuſed, if I enlarge beyond the Readers patience, for I think the People want inſtruction, and a better underſtanding of this point, as much as any pertaining to this Subject. Now,

1. In how primary a ſenſe, the Word (Edifying) belongs to God's Church, as an Houſe or Spiritual Building in the Scriptures, may be ſeen in theſe Texts amongſt many others, * *Ye are God's Husbandry*, ſaith the Apoſtle to the Church of *Corinth*, *ye are Gods's Building*: and to the Church of *Epheſus* thus †: *In Chriſt the whole Building* (that is, the whole Church) *fitly framed together*, *groweth unto an Holy Temple in the Lord.* From hence the Church's Governours are ſtyled Builders; ‡ *The ſtone which the Builders refuſed* (that is, the then Church-Governours) *the ſame is become the Head of the corner:* And from hence St. *Paul* calls himſelf a Maſter-builder, * that is, in planting the Churches: And again from hence,

* 1 Cor. 3. 9.

οἰκοδομή.

† Eph. 2. 21.

‡ Mat. 21. 42.

* 1 Cor. 3. 9, 10.

, the increaſe and growth of the Church is
its Building and Edifica-
* He commends Prophe- * 1 Cor. 14.
, that is, expounding the 5.
ures more than ſpeaking
nknown Tongues, without an Interpre-
:cauſe by it the Church receives Edificati-
Building; that is, a greater increaſe and
n towards perfection: And
h there, † That all thoſe † Ibid. Verſ.
rdinary Spiritual Gifts then 12.
ed, were for the building
ying of the Church; yea, and the Autho-
binding and looſing, and inflicting Church
:es, was for Edification
ot for Deſtruction; ‡ and ‡ 2 Cor. 10.8.
nſelf and his Fellow Apo-
he profeſſeth, * *We do all* * 2 Cor. 13.
, *dearly beloved, for your* 10. & 12. 19.
g, meaning to build, and
pull down, becauſe the Church-Cenſures
or preſerving the Church's Communion
by caſting out the ſcandalous, and for
g the Unity entire: And as the Word
s Building in all theſe places, ſo may it
how it primarily relates to the Church
e Sayings of his; † (That
urch may receive edifying) † Eph. 4. 12,
gain (Chriſt aſcending up 13, 14, 16.
h, gave ſome Apoſtles, *&c.*
edifying of the Body of Chriſt) go on
and you may ſee how he places edifying
y and love, which ſhews, that to make a
in the Church's Unity, muſt be a very

in your moſt Holy Faith, &c. It intimates manifeſtly, That they muſt take heed they do not ſeparate, nor have to do with ſuch as ſeparate, if they would edify or build up: And that of St. *Luke* * is very obſervable, when he ſaith, that the Churches were edified, when they ceaſed to be diſperſed by Perſecution and could unite. *Then* (ſaith he) *had the Churches reſt throughout all* Judea, Galilee *and* Samaria, *and were edified:* Where by their being edified, may very well be meant their being ſettled in peace, not only becauſe their Reſt is given as the reaſon of it, which intimates that they were then edified, when they were no longer ſcattered, but alſo becauſe an increaſe in Grace and Comfort (which is an edifying of particular Members) is mentioned beſides and added to it †, (*were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghoſt, were multiplied.*)

* Acts 9. 3.

† Ibid. ver. 31.

This notion of Edification, (*viz.* the Church's Unity and Peace, and the compactneſs of its Members) St. *Paul* plainly teaches in his Exhortation ‡, to *follow after the things that make for peace*, becauſe it is by thoſe things that make for peace, that we muſt edify one another; and he alſo * aſcribes it to Charity, that it edifieth, Charity being the great Bond of Peace and Union: For how doth Charity edify otherwiſe than by maintaining

‡ Rom. 14. 19.

* 1 Cor. 8. 1.

ing Union among Church-members, and keeping them together as Fellow-members, whose Head is Christ: For as he ſaith *,

The Members have the ſame care one for another, and ſo there is no Schiſm in the Body. * 1 Cor. 2. 25.

Such therefore is the chief notion of Edification in the Scripture: it primarily and principally ſignifies the building up, enlarging and proſperity of the Church, to which Unity, and Love, and Charity are moſt proper, but Separation in no wiſe, for it cannot conſiſt therewith; nay, and to crown all, we have it from our wiſe Saviour himſelf, who being the wiſdom of God, underſtood beſt what would edify beſt, and that Edification he placeth in the Acceſſion of multitudes of Converts to the Church; and to this end, in his admirable Prayer, a little before his Paſſion, he thus Petitions for his whole Church's Unity, even for all that ſhould afterwards believe on him through his Apoſtle's Preaching; for he knew well, that Separation would not edifie, that is, not multiply Believers, but rather be a ſtumbling block, and an offence to them, that did not believe and hinder them from embracing the Faith, and from coming into the Church for the edifying and further building it up. And, O, would to God thoſe Men would read his Words over and over, that make ſo little matter of the Church's Unity, and are ſo fond of Separate Meetings for better edifying! O that they would lay it to heart, how croſs they walk to our Saviour's

Prayer. * *That they all may be one* (ſaith he) *as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they all may be one with us:* For what end? plainly in order to their edifying, building up, and increaſe of Believers flocking into his Church: For it follows, That the World may believe that thou haſt ſent me, and ſo his Church might be edified by an addition or acceſſion of multitudes of Believers thereunto.

* Joh. 17. 10. & 21.

I have been much more large in this than I deſigned, becauſe the Perſons that go to Separate Meetings for better edifying, altogether mean their own edifying, and by that they mean too, their increaſing more in Knowledge, without any regard at all to the edifying or building up of the Church, which is moſtwhat the Scriptures meaning in its whole current. Theſe Scriptures compared and ſet together, ſufficiently diſcover thoſe Mens miſtakes, and yet nevertheleſs, it muſt be confeſſed that the Scriptures ſometimes ſpeak of particular Chriſtians edifying alſo, though principally of the Churches, therefore I ſhall in the next place cloſe with them that ſeparate, for better edifying in their own ſenſe of the Word.

2. The edifying of particular Chriſtians; and here I ſhall firſt give three or four inſtances of this edifying in Scripture, and then ſhew that there is no reaſon for any ones hoping to be better edified in any of theſe inſtances of Edification that the Scripture tells of in Separate Meetings than in the Church of *England*'s ſolemn Aſſemblies

blies, or thirdly, if they could on good Grounds hope it, yet ought they not to ſeek or accept it in a way of Schiſm and Separation.

1. The inſtances wherein the Scripture makes the edifying of particular Chriſtians to conſiſt are theſe four.

1. The Apoſtle * commends Prophecying or Preaching above ſtrange Tongues, as being a ſpeaking to Edification, that is, to inſtruct Believers in the true Doctrine, and to convince their Underſtandings of the truth thereof, which ſtrange Tongues did not, no Man underſtanding them; ſo that, that is doubtleſs one good ſort of edifying, when Mens Knowledge becomes more clear and more firm, without doubtings. But of what? Not a Knowledge of pretended Myſteries, nor of unprofitable Curioſities and Speculations, but of ſuch fundamental Truths or Articles of their Faith as they ought to believe, and ſuch neceſſary Duties as they ought to practiſe in the courſe of their lives for their Salvation: To have their minds well ſtored with theſe, and to be more fully perſuaded of their truth, and certainly this is Mens being truly edified in their Knowledge.

* 1 Cor. 14. 2, 3, 4, 19, 24.

2. The Apoſtle makes Edification one end of Church-cenſures †, becauſe of their tendency to reform Mens manners, and of vain Diſputes and Queſtions ‡, he ſaith, They do not miniſter to Edification, becauſe they did not improve Men in real goodneſs, they

† 2 Cor. 3. 10.

‡ 1 Tim. 1. 4.

they made none more godly or better livers, ſo that Men are truly edified, when they become better Men, and learn their duty better, both towards God, their Neighbours and themſelves, when they grow more devout to God, more juſt and charitable to Men, more ſober, meek, humble and temperate, and more mortified to the World and all its Vanities. This indeed is true Edification, and it is very needful for them that talk ſo much of better edifying in Separate Meetings, to conſider well of it, who (it is to be feared) judge of their edifying by other meaſures than theſe. Perhaps, for hearing the beloved notes of a Party, as the only godly People; perhaps for becoming more zealous againſt the Ceremonies, or the like, being mean while ſcandalouſly defective in the duties of juſtice in their dealings, or of obedience to Authority, and divers other branches of Chriſtian Morality. In ſhort, whoſoever is truly edified, he becomes better as to all vertue, and all his duty neceſſary to his Salvation.

3. The Apoſtle ſaith of him *that ſpeaks in an unknown tongue*, * *that he ſpeaks not to Men but to God*, and he edifies himſelf only, that is, in fervency of affection to God and his Truth, and in Devotion; and of profitable Communication, he ſaith †, it miniſters grace to the Hearers, and is good to the uſe of edifying, that is, in godly Affections, and a more gracious diſpoſedneſs.

* 1 Cor. 14. 2, 4.

† Eph. 4. 24.

And

And * he makes Chriſtians exhorting and comforting one another the way *to edify one another*, that is, to become more firm in the Faith amidſt thoſe Dangers and Perſecutions that were then upon them; ſo that, when Mens holy purpoſes are better fixed, their Affections to God and his Truth, and to all that is good and godly, become more fervent, then are they edified, both which are beſt effected, by convincing their Underſtandings through plain Scripture and Strength of true reaſon grounded upon Scripture, not by ſolemn looks, not by melting tones, not by pretty taking ſimilitudes, nor by the Preachers vehement expreſſion, all which will wear off in a ſhort time; when as weighty Arguments and Motives being (as it were) imbodyed into Mens Minds and Judgments, as they greatly affect for the preſent, ſo will they ſtay with them to influence them to perſeverance in the Truth, and in all Well-doing. * 1 Theſ. 5. 11.

4. The weak Brother being confirmed and emboldned in his conſcience (although in a wrong caſe) is called by the Apoſtle, his being edified. † (*If any Man ſee thee, who haſt knowledge, ſit at meat in the Idol's Temple, ſhall not the conſcience of him that is weak* (that is, who before ſcrupled it) *be imboldned?* In the Original it is, be edified, and eat alſo, that is, quit his fears and doubts, and have more confi- † 1 Cor. 8. 10. οἰκοδομηθήσεται.

dence

dence by thy example: So that, whereas Doubts and Deſpondencies hugely diſcourage Men in a religious courſe, and give a check to all good Improvements: this is therefore another inſtance of Edification, to have conſcience reſolved in practical caſes, and freed from all ſcruples and doubts, ſo as to find more peace of Mind and Joy in God, and comfortable expectations in doing a Mans Duty. The reſult of all which, is this: Any private Chriſtian may juſtly think himſelf edified, when either he underſtands better, or more firmly believes the truth, or improves in the practice of all vertue, or when from powerful Convictions, his good Reſolutions are firmer, or his Affections towards God and all Goodneſs are more fervent, or he is better ſatisfied where he doubted before, being comforted with ſome well-grounded hopes of Salvation.

This I think a very clear account of what the Scriptures ſpeak of Edification, both in its primary and principal ſenſe, as referred to the whole Church of God, and alſo in its ſubordinate ſenſe, as it relates to particular Chriſtians. And from hence, the great miſtake of many is palpable, who think they then only edifie, when they improve their Knowledge, for right edifying muſt be alſo in all manner of Vertue, Humility, Meekneſs, Charity, Patience, Contentedneſs, contempt of the World, Heavenly-mindedneſs, and all inſtances of Obedience, and all may be comprehended in two Words. A Man may be truly ſaid to be edified, when he becomes wiſer or better, wiſer to Salvation, or

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in things pertaining to his Salvation, and better in his Heart and Life. Now it being thus truly ſtated what Edification is,

2. The great Queſtion will be, Whether there be any juſt reaſon for any ones ſaying, that he is better edified in any of theſe inſtances in Separate Meetings than in the Church's Aſſemblies? And this Queſtion will branch it ſelf into two diſtinct Inquiries; one as to the Teachers in the Meetings, the other as to the People that hear them. As to the diſſenting Teachers, it will be neceſſary to inquire, whether they truly Preach more to Edification than the Miniſters of the Church of *England*? And as to the People, the Queſtion will be, whether they really edifie better by hearing the Teachers in Separate Meetings, than they might do by hearing us, if they themſelves were not in the fault? The former Queſtion may indeed ſeem invidious at the firſt hearing it; for we ſay, compariſons are odious, and they are ſo, eſpecially when they muſt occaſion ones ſelf-praiſe: but they are notwithſtanding ſometimes neceſſary, and we have St. *Paul's* example * for it, when he and his Miniſtry was vilified in the Church of *Corinth*, by ſome who preferred the falſe Apoſtles before him. And Now

* 2 Cor. 3. & 10. & 11.

1. The Queſtion is, whether the Teachers in Conventicles Preach really more to Edification than the Church Miniſters? And in this caſe, the People muſt in reaſon be admoniſhed to judge of Sermons, whether they be profitable or unprofitable, edifying or unedifying by ſome

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ſolid and ſtraight Rule; not (ſure) by having their Ears tickled with ſudden changes of melting tones in the delivery, nor yet by loud vociferations, nor by having their Eyes affected with vehement, paſſionate, and ſometimes antick, Stage-like Geſtures, or any thing like theſe to pleaſe the Animal or ſenſual Part, nor by the Sermons agreeing with the Hearers eſpouſed Opinions, nor for any canting Phraſes in Prayer or Preaching, nor for the glorious Privileges of the Saints ingroſſing a Diſcourſe, with ſome comfortable hints to the Hearers that thoſe Privileges are theirs, being all this while very ſuperficially taught their neceſſary Duties for ſecuring their Salvation. Theſe, or the like, can in no wiſe anſwer the Scripture-notion of Edification; but if the Separate Teachers do indeed teach the fundamental Doctrines of Chriſtianity more plainly, gravely and intelligibly, or if they give ſtronger reaſons to confirm Mens Belief of them, or more powerfully perſuade Men to their neceſſary Duties, or from their ſinful Doings, or give more ſatisfactory ſolutions of caſes or doubts of conſcience, then indeed will their Sermons be truly, and in their nature more edifying than ours are; but if they be tryed by theſe meaſures, I believe there are not many ſober, unprejudiced Men will ſay, that there is any want of profitable, and very edifying Sermons in the Pariſh Churches, or that thoſe in the Separate Meetings excel them in the Churches in any of theſe reſpects.

But ſtill when all is ſaid, Mens edifying in either place, that is, their growth in Knowledge

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or Grace, or their becoming truly wiſer or better, is to be aſcribed to the aſſiſtances and co-operations of God's holy, quickning Spirit, and the bleſſing of God accompanying his own Ordinances, and not to any Preacher's greater Gifts, Abilities or Performances in their Adminiſtration, no nor to any Miniſters perſonal Holineſs, for * *Paul* plants, and *Apollo* waters, *but it is God that gives the increaſe*; and if ſo, * 1 Cor. 3. 6, 7.

Who can diſprove me if I ſay, that the influences, co-operations, and aſſiſtances of God's Spirit may not be looked for but in God's way, which Schiſm and Separation cannot be? For as the Soul acts in the Body, which it animates, and no other Body, ſo doth God's Spirit ordinarily work in the Unity of the one Body; which Unity being moſt dear to God, How can it be likely that his Bleſſing can be, where the Unity is broken, or in a manifeſt Diviſion or Separation? We ſee how cloſely the Apoſtle † joyns the one Body with the one Spirit. (one Body, one Spirit.) † Eph. 4. 4.

Indeed let the Sermons be what they will, no Man can truly profit or edifie to Salvation in a way of Schiſm; for it is at leaſt difficult, if not utterly impoſſible to find any promiſe of God in his Word to ground Mens hopes upon, of the bleſſed and ſaving Operations of God's Holy Spirit, ſave in his Church's Unity and Communion. Be this tryed, if you pleaſe, even by matter of Fact, which leads to the ſecond branch of Inquiry, that as to the People, *viz.*

2. Whe-

2. Whether it be true, that the People reall edifie better by the Preaching in the Convent cle, than they might do by ours in the Parish Churches, if themſelves were not in the fault and for this, we may appeal to long and ſa experience, how conceited, how humorſome proud, ſtubborn, and intractable, how unyield ing to their Governours, how cenſorious of thei Brethren Men grow by going to the Meetings being indeed neither better taught, nor becom ing better Chriſtians by it, that is, neither mor humble, nor more meek, charitable, juſt, o more obſervant either of their Rules, or thei good Laws or Orders, whether in Church o State.

For all which, I even appeal to their own moſt eminent Men, particularly * Mr. *Baxter*, who complain of the Peoples injudiciouſneſs i applauding Teachers and thei Sermons, and deſpiſing thoſ that Preach the greateſt Point of Religion more plainly an more convincingly to their judg ments and conſciences, and ſ are much more profitable fo them; yea, and gives all thoſ bad Characters of many tha break out of the Church's Unity for better Edi fication. But waving what the World hatl ſadly experienced, I deſire only a juſt conſidera tion of the merit of the thing.

* Baxter's *Cure of Church-Diviſions, pag.* 215, 188, 107. *Mr.* Hilderſham's *Lectures on* Joh. 4. *pag.* 270.

All good Chriſtians are (as this Diſcourſe hatl ſhewed) to look upon themſelves as Church mem

members, and the Church's Edification and Building up ſhould be regarded in their deſiring their own edifying, that is, their good improvement in Spiritual Wiſdom and Knowledge, and in all Goodneſs: for as the Church's Edification ſignifies, and very much depends upon theirs, ſo their Improvements have the name of Edification, as it is attained in the Unity and Communion of the Church, which makes them of the one Body, and of the Spiritual Houſe and Temple of the Lord; and as the Church is called the Temple of the Lord, ſo is every particular, godly Chriſtian the Temple of the Lord, in reſpect of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him; and yet God hath but one Temple, one Church, and the Spirit only dwells in that Church, and in particular godly Chriſtians, as living Members of that Church: and as the Church is edified and built up, growing into a Spiritual Houſe or Temple, by a firm and cloſe Union and Communion of all its Members, ſo is every Church-member edified, as he grows up in all Spiritual Wiſdom, Underſtanding, Grace and Goodneſs in the Church's Unity and Communion, which is a very clear proof of the little hopes any one can have of being better edified otherwiſe than in that Unity and Communion, and to be ſure not by breaking out of it.

This is very much confirmed by that much greater value God ſets upon his Church's Unity and Peace than any he can have for any the greateſt Improvements in Knowledge that any particular Chriſtians can either attain or hope for; we may be ſure God values things as his

Word values them. Nov
* 1 Cor. 1. 5. 8. compared with chap. 12. 31. and 13. 4. Apoſtle ſpeaking of Proph whereby Mens Knowledg increaſed, faith, *Covet ea the beſt Gifts, and yet ſhew a more excellent way*; and more excellent way follo
the next Chapter, which is Charity, wl
the great Inſtrument of Unity and Peace
how he commends Love and Unity as the
of all Chriſtian Duties, yo
† Col. 3. 14. ſee †. He ſaith, *that it is ry bond of perfectneſs*, that that which perfects all th
‡ 1 Pet. 4. 8. From whence St. *Peter* thus ‡, *above all things ha vent charity among your ſelves*; and ſo S
pronouncing Faith, Hope and Charity
the chief Cardinal Graces
* 1 Cor. 13. 13. preſly ſaith, *that the gre theſe is charity.* In it th
muſt Chriſtians eſpecially
or he edifies to no purpoſe in any of the
for ſo the Apoſtle teacheth us, that the proficiency in Knowledge, yea, and in vertues is unprofitable, if Men tranſg
Laws of Charity. † *Th*
‡ Verſ. 1, 2, 3. *have the gift of Prophecy, derſtand all Myſteries, a all Knowledge*, yea and e
Tongue of Men and Angels, *and have remove Mountains, and after all have not ty, it profits me nothing*: Yea, though I

beral in Alms-giving as *to give all my Goods to the poor*, nay and be ſo zealous for my Religion as to become a Martyr for it, even *giving my Body to be burned, yet if I have not charity, it profits me nothing*: Foraſmuch therefore as wilful and cauſleſs Schiſms and Diviſionsare the higheſt breach of Charity,as they are alſo of Church Unity and Communion; they are therefore to all other vertues and attainments, *as a dead fly in a box of moſt precious Ointment*;ſo that Men take the moſt unlikely courſe they can take to edifie, when they run into a way of Schiſm, Separation and Diviſion, for they muſt in all probability rather go backward than forward in private Edification: and being a courſe unlikely, I ſhall now ſhew they take a courſe unlawful, which is the third thing I propounded.

3. Suppoſe Men could edifie never ſo much more in Separate Meetings than they can do in the Pariſh Churches, yet is it ſinful for them to break out of the Unity and Communion of the Orthodox Church they live in for better Edification in Separate Meetings, and the reaſon is, becauſe this is none of thoſe reaſons the Scripture or Catholick Verity allows of for Separation. Indeed, if any ſinful thing ſhould be required as a condition of Church Communion, like as in the Church of *Rome*, as Adoration of the Hoſt, Invocation of Saints, Image-worſhip, or any falſe Articles of Doctrine or Superſtition, then would every good Chriſtian be bound in conſcience to ſtand it out and not comply, becauſe Unity and Peace with ſuch a Church would be a wicked Conſpiracy, both againſt the Catholick

and Univerſal Church that diſclaims ſuch co ruptions, and againſt Chriſt the Head there the Laws of whoſe Goſpel forbid them all; b when there are no ſuch ſinful terms of Churc communion impoſed, and the Church is ſou and orthodox, and all the Doctrines and Duti of Chriſtianity are ſecured (which is by the co feſſion of the moſt eminent Diſſenters our c here in *England*) then is it ſinful in any Chriſ ans to make a rent in the Church, or to parta with them that divide or ſeparate from it, in p tence of better edifying by them, and theſe ſhall prove by ſome ſtrong reaſons, and moſt them ſo plain in the Scriptures, that he that ru may read them there.

But firſt it muſt be confeſſed, That all godl minded Chriſtians have very great reaſon to c ſire the beſt means, and helps, and opportu ties of edifying, amongſt which, the beſt Pray and the beſt Sermons muſt be reckoned, and hath little care of his Soul, that is not both than ful to God, and values them not highly w enjoys them, and that endeavours not in a gular way to obtain them without ſpare of c who wants them; which notwithſtanding M muſt at the ſame time be content with what th have, when they in all peaceable ways have e deavoured to get as good as they can, and no means ſeparate for better. For

1. It is as much the fundamental Law Chriſt's Church, as it is of any civil Society th the publick intereſt be preferred before any Ma private benefit, from whence all means of pa ticular Chriſtians private Edification are ſubo dinat

dinate, and muſt give way to the Edification of the Church, which is its Unity and Peace, and it is as much againſt the Laws of the Goſpel for any Chriſtians, who are by their Baptiſm made Church-members to break the Church's Peace and Unity for their own better edifying, as it is for any Member of a Kingdom or Corporation to do any thing prejudicial to the Publick for their own particular advantage.

This will be evident by diverſe Paſſages in St. *Paul's* Epiſtles: He tells us,

* That *we are the Body of Chriſt, and Members in particular*, and therefore we ſhould as Fellow-members readily deny our ſelves, and forego our own pleaſure or profit for one another: for if *one Member ſuffer, all the Members ſuffer with it*, and the Members are to have the ſame care one of another, that is, as of themſelves, and † *no Man* therefore ſhould *ſeek his own, but every Man anothers wealth.* Since therefore no Man will for his own profit or better edifying fall into, or joyn with a Schiſmatical Party that thus looks beyond himſelf; nor can there be any Schiſm in the Body, when the Members have the ſame care one for another, becauſe a Man will then mind others Edification as well as his own, and the Church's Unity and Peace and Edification above all, that is not wedded to himſelf and his own intereſt, but hath a truly Catholick Diſpoſition: This ſhews, that it can in no wiſe conſiſt with a Chriſtian's Duty, as he is a Church-member to go to Separate

* 1 Cor. 12. 25, 26, 27.

† 1 Cor. 10. 24.

Meetings, in hopes of better edifying there. See what the Apoſtle ſaith fully to this purpoſe, * *Let us follow after the things that make for Peace, and things whereby we may edifie one another*: (not our ſelves alone, but *whereby we may edifie one another.*) And again, † *above all things put on Charity*, as if he had ſaid, let Charity rule, ſo as to give Laws to all other Vertues; for it follows, *it is the bond of perfectneſs*, it even perfects us by uniting and binding us together; or as if he had ſaid, all other Vertues and Graces are imperfect without Charity, and will find no acceptance with God. Now that Charity will certainly engage us to Unity and Peace with one another, and with the Church of God; which, that it muſt be carefully aimed at, and taken heed to by all Chriſtians, appears by what follows: *Let the peace of God rule in your hearts whereunto ye are called in one Body.* What can be plainer in any Text or Context than this here? That as all Members of Bodies politick muſt be publick ſpirited, ſo much more Church-members, that is, all that are baptized: They muſt willingly forgoe their own ſuppoſed advantage of being better edified, rather than for its ſake break the Unity of, or make any diſturbance or breach in the Unity of the Church.

* Rom 14. 19.

† Col. 3. 14.

2. If Men do not ſee, they muſt neceſſarily fall into the heavy and heinous guilt of Schiſm, which is moſt manifeſt in the *Corinthian's* caſe, whoſe Diviſions were upon this very pretence of hear-

hearing the moſt edifying Teachers, and who being zealous of Spiritual Gifts,

* admired them whom they ſuppoſed to have the beſt Gifts, glorying in Men, † and *being puffed up for one againſt another*, flocking after thoſe Teachers whom they had moſt in admiration: and ſome there were, who even diſparaged St. *Paul* himſelf as rude in Speech ‡, as who ſhould ſay, not ſo well gifted, or by whoſe Preaching they edified leſs; and others were for *Paul*, as well as ſome for *Apollo*, and others for *Cephas*, * which he calls Contentions and Diviſions, and for which he tells them, *they were carnal and walked as Men*, which, if Chriſtians can do, it will be impoſſible to put any ſtop to Separations: Yea, we may then ſay, farewell to all Church-Unity, for it's a pretence that will almoſt at all times ſerve almoſt all Mens turns, that have a mind to break looſe from any Church's Communion, or from the ſolemn Aſſemblies thereof, and there can be no faſt hold of them in any Chriſtian Church whatſoever.

* 1 Cor. 14. 12.
† 1 Cor. 11. 21. & 4. 6.
‡ 2 Cor. 11. 4, 6.
* 1 Cor. 1. 10, 11, 12.

There can be no Union in any Kingdom, City, Pariſh, Town, Neighbourhood or Family, if every one may go to hear what Teacher he fancies moſt; for one Man will fancy this Mans way, and another Man anothers, and few Men the beſt, that is, the plaineſt Preaching, well bottomed in God's Word and Sound Reaſon, which is beſt and apteſt to convince the judg-

ment and work upon the conſcience, nay, and the ſame Perſons will have different humors and fancies at different times, ſo that what pleaſes them for a time, will not pleaſe them a little while after, and ſo by the rule of going, as they fancy, to edifie beſt, they are never likely to be conſtant to any Miniſter, but will be changing Teachers as often as their fancy changeth; but it's enough to ſay, that this is apparent Schiſm, if we will heed the Apoſtle's cenſure of it: And therefore,

3. As ſinful in the Church, as any Sedition is in the ſtate, having the ſame effects there as here, even breaking all into pieces, and making as many Bodies of one Body, as there be oppoſite Parties and Meetings. When there is a Schiſm made in the Church, in pretence of Deficiencies in its Edification; it is juſt ſuch a remedy as Sedition or Rebellion is in the State, in pretence of redreſſing Defects and Grievances: Both are alike ſinful, and are in St. *Paul's* Catalogue of the Works of the Fleſh, * and are open Ruptures and Breaches of that Peace and Charity which God ſtrictly requires, and which is the moſt ſacred of all Duties in his ſight, and both of them are alike fooliſh too, being a Cure and Remedy incomparably worſe than the Diſeaſe, for they tear all in pieces, and can be no good way to mend any faults, but will increaſe them, and to this I add what is moſt weighty.

* Gal. 5. 19, 20.

4. To make better Edification, the Ground of Separation, perverts all means of Edification, and defeats God's end in beſtowing them, for they

are

by Divine Appointment ſubſervient to
ırch's Peace and Unity, and deſigned to
hiſm out of the Church: From hence
ile of the Apoſtle, * *Let*
gs be done in Charity, as * 1 Cor. 16.
, *Let all things be done to* 14. & 14. 26.
g. He is ſpeaking there
ted Gifts (*ſpeaking with unknown Tongues*,
ctating Holy Prayers, Hymns, and Spiri-
ngs) and them he injoyns to be manag-
ı Charity; and therefore, when the Spi-
Propheſie or Preaching came upon any
nably, cauſing confuſion by ſeveral Per-
aking in the Church at the ſame time,
for ſtinting the Spirit for this reaſon, *that*
not the Author of confuſion
Churches. † And in his † 1 Cor. 14.
to the *Epheſians*, ‡ he 32, 73.
this the great end of ‡ Eph. 4. 11,
giving all that variety of 12, 13.
-officers, extraordinary
linary, Apoſtles, Prophets, Evangeliſts,
and Teachers, *all for Edification of the*
Chriſt, as well as for the perfecting of the
that is, edifying particular Chriſtians in
ıd godly Practice, which muſt be in ſub-
y to the edifying of the whole Body of
till we all come in the Unity of the Faith
perfect Man: So that thoſe Officers be-
n to edifie particular Chriſtians, are alſo
) edifie the Body, whereof they are Mem-
ıd the Unity of the Body muſt be the
h of Church-officers and Church-mem-
en as all the Members in the natural Bo-

dy,

Ligaments of Union: for ſo ſaith * the ſame Apoſtle, the *whole Body fitly joyned together and compacted by that which every Joynt ſupplieth.* Mark the expreſſion well, every Joynt, every Church-officer, in whom the Members are joyned and united to one another. What theſe Joynts ſupply, muſt faſten, unite and compact the Body, the Church, and muſt in no wiſe tear or divide the Members from each other. By all which it is plain, that one Miniſters greater Gifts excelling others, ſhould by no means occaſion Diviſions, and neither ſhould the better gifted Miniſter make that bad uſe of his Gifts to draw another Miniſter's People from him, nor ſhould particular Chriſtians forſake their own Miniſter, becauſe another Miniſter is better gifted, and can edifie him better as he thinks; for this will be a monſtrous perverting of God's End, in giving thoſe Gifts more to one than to another; for God would have all Mens Gifts to be ſo uſed and applied, as to make increaſe of the Body to the edifying it ſelf in love. * Eph. 4. 16.

In this Anſwer to the 18th Queſtion, I have been much larger than I deſigned, but not without cauſe, for I have found this to be the almoſt conſtant Plea of the common People for their going to the Conventicle, who have formerly frequented the Church, That they do but go thither for better edifying; and why may not a Man go where he finds he can edifie beſt? And a Reverend Brother, very opportunely putting Mr. *John Kettlewell's* Sermon upon 1 *Cor.* 14. 12.

into

into my hands, when I had prepared an A
to the Queſtion, according to my own tho
and obſervations, I thought it my ne
duty to make the beſt uſe I could of that
lent Diſcourſe, for a fuller Information of
that are teachable, of the groſneſs and dan
their miſtake in this matter.

Now to ſum up all, If there be no goo
ſon for any to think, that the Teachers in
rate Meetings do really Preach better, or
to Edification there, than the Church of
Land's Miniſters do in the Church's Aſſem
nor can the People have any good Groun
hope to be better edified in the true ſenſe o
fication by them than by us, nor indeed
at all edified by the Separate Teachers bei
a Schiſm and Separation, and ſo out of
way, and ſeeing if it were indeed much
than ſo, if they could really edifie better by
under their Teaching or Miniſtry, yet it i
terly unlawful to ſeparate, or make a brea
the Church's Unity, for a Mans own ſup
advantage of better edifying, becauſe it is ag
the fundamental Laws of all Communities
Societies for any Member to ſeek his own
with the publick damage or prejudice; a
this hold good, much more in Chriſt's Ch
becauſe the Peace and Unity of the Ch
ſhould be taken care of firſt and chiefly, an
private Chriſtian's Profit or Edification onl
ſubſervency to it, wherein all good Chri
ought to deny themſelves, the care of the Chu
Peace being to be preferred before all other
ties: If to take this courſe of going where

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fancy they can edifie beſt, make Church-union impoſſible, and will open a door to Diviſions and Separations without end or meaſure, if it be in Scripture expreſly charged with the great guilt of Schiſm; and if Schiſm in the Church on pretence of better edifying, be in its nature and effects equivalent to Sedition and Rebellion in the State, under pretence of redreſſing Grievances, both of them being alike ſinful and alike fooliſh; and if it be a manifeſt perverting God's end, in giving all helps and means of Edification, all his Spiritual Gifts, and all Church-offices, which is to prevent and keep out Schiſm, and to maintain his Church in Peace and Unity: From all theſe Premiſes, any one of, even ordinary underſtanding, may diſcern this to be a moſt unwarrantable courſe, for any to forſake the Church's Aſſemblies, and indeed to forſake the Miniſtry of their own proper Miniſter, lawfully ſet over and ſettled amongſt them, and to go to Separate Meetings in pretence of, or in hopes of better edifying and profiting moſt there.

Now this of better edifying is the common Plea of the common People, but there is another of Perſons of higher rank, who pretending great ſcruples of conſcience againſt the Church of *England*'s Communion, even totally ſeparate from it, who yet are taught (and accordingly practiſe) ſo far to communicate with it, as to come to the Church's Aſſemblies, and as to joyn in the Holy Offices there, ſo particularly to receive the Lord's Supper, (the higheſt Act of Religion) according to the Church's Order, for this end, to qualifie themſelves for ſome profita-

ble

ble, Honourable, or Authoritative Place or Of fice, whereof no Man can by the Laws of th Realm be capable without doing this: This commonly called, Occaſional Communion which muſt be conſidered of, the beſt we ca in the Anſwer to the next Queſtion.

Queſt. XIX. Doth that Occaſional Com munication with the Church of *England* which profeſſed Separatiſts, who have left it and have fixed themſelves in a Separat Meeting or Conventicle, perform for capa citating themſelves for ſome Gainful, Honour able, or Authoritative Place and Office i the State, or to ſerve a turn, come up to or anſwer any of the right Rules or Mea ſures of Catholick Unity or Church Com munion?

Anſ. To this I boldly anſwer, in no wiſe, i being indeed a bare-faced Hypocriſie, and wha is really an intolerable Abuſe of any Orthodox Eſtabliſhed Church. To explain it will ſuffici ently expoſe it. They that make uſe of the di ſtinction of Conſtant and Occaſional Commu nion, underſtand by conſtant or fixed Commu nion, a communicating with ſome particula Church, as a profeſſed Member thereof; and by Occaſional Communion, they mean a commu nicating with ſome other Church beſides tha whereof they own themſelves to be Members as they have ſome profitable occaſion to invit them

them to it, to capacitate them (ſuppoſe) for ſome Dignity, Office, or Place of Truſt, Profit, or Credit, for which they cannot by the Laws of the Land be qualified without conformity to that Eſtabliſhed Church, whereof they will not own themſelves to be Members (not to mention their thinking (perhaps) to avoid the imputation of Schiſm by this ſmall appearance of conformity which it cannot do.) Now any one upon the very firſt ſight may perceive this to be more worldly policy, making a very ſtalking Horſe of Religion, and yet it is much worſe than ſo, the lurking deſign being that greater Perſons of the Sects, may have a door opened to ſuch places of Power or Preferment, as wherein they may weaken the Church's Eſtabliſhment, and ſerve their reſpective Party or Faction. Now what leſs do they herein than verifie that of the Apoſtle *, where he affirms it of ſuch as cauſe Diviſions, that they ſerve *not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own bellies*: But I offer further theſe following Conſiderations.

* Rom. 16. 18.

1. The diſtinction of conſtant and occaſional Communion with an Eſtabliſhed Church, is perfectly Novel, and utterly unknown to the Primitive Churches or Fathers: As the Learned Author of the *London Diſcourſes*, intituled, (*A Reſolution of ſome Caſes of Conſcience which reſpect Church-Communion*) out of which, moſt of the Queſtions and their Anſwers are extracted with ſome proper Additions, ſaith, this diſtinction would have grievouſly puzzled St. *Cyprian* and

as much as to ſay, that it is a Member or n
Member, juſt as it hath occaſion for Membe
ſhip: no more will any rational Perſon allo
this in Church-memberſhip, or in Church-com
munion any more than in the Natural Body, th
caſe being the ſame in both. A Church Memb
muſt either be a fix'd Member of the Churc
or he is no Member at all; and if he be indee
a Church Member, that begets a near relatic
to the Church, and that relation gives him
Right and Title to, and an Obligation of Dut
to communicate with it, which Relation, ar
which Right and Duty muſt be as fix'd ar
conſtant as his Memberſhip is fix'd and conſtan
for if to communicate with a Church, belo
as a Right, and as a Duty to the Members the
of, then muſt his Communion with it be
fix'd and conſtant as his Memberſhip of, a
Relation to it.

But of what Church is a Chriſtian as a Ch
ſtian a Member? Truely, of the whole Cath
lick Church primarily, even of the one Myſ
cal Body of Chriſt, and then ſecondarily of th
particular Church he lives in, being a Sound a
Orthodox part of the Catholick Church, b
therefore of no particular Church, ſo diſtinguiſ
ed from the Catholick Church as is any comp
ny of Men that is in a Schiſm or Separatic
Now conſider the reſult of this, If the Comm
nion of every Chriſtian as a Chriſtian, and a
Church-member, muſt be as fix'd and conſt
as is his Memberſhip of, and Relation to t
Catholick Church: Then truly, no Man w
diſtinguiſh betwixt conſtant and occaſional Co
munio

munion, any more than he will betwixt conſtant and occaſional Memberſhip, that at all underſtands what he ſpeaks.

Again, ſeeing all Exerciſes and Acts of Communion have a neceſſary Relation to a State of Communion, which State of Communion is indeed, a Mans being a fixed Member of the Church (from whence, that which is an Act of Communion, when it is performed by a Church-member, is (as I have ſhewed) no Act of Communion, when performed by one that is not a Church-member.) To talk then of an occaſional Communion with a Church, will be the ſame contradiction, or at leaſt Soleciſm, as to ſpeak of a Mans being an Occaſional Member; becauſe, no Man can perform any Act of Communion with a Church, whereof he is no Member, and if ſo, he cannot communicate occaſionally with a Church whereof he is no Member, unleſs it could be ſaid, *Tho' he that is not in Communion, may yet perform and exerciſe the Acts of Communion:* for he that is not the Church's Member cannot be in Communion with it: nor can it here avail to ſay, *That all Acts of Communion which conſtitute the Chriſtian Worſhip, as Hearing, Praying, and Receiving the Lord's Supper, &c. muſt of neceſſity be performed in ſome particular Church.* For I have ſhewed before, that ſtill they are not to be look'd upon as Acts of particular Church Communion, but of Catholick Communion with the whole Church; and every ſound part of it, although performed in a particular Church. The conſequence of which will be, That every Good and Catholick Chri-

ſtian is both in a State of Communion with the Catholick Church, and alſo lives in a conſtant exerciſe of all Acts of Chriſtian Communion with it, and with all Sound and Orthodox Parts of it, as well as with that particular Church where he lives, and not with it only. The reaſon is, becauſe every Act of Divine Worſhip, which is performed as an Act of Communion with ſuch a particular Church, is (if that Church be in Catholick Communion) an Act of Communion with the whole Church, and with all its Sound and Orthodox Parts; and if ſo, then the exerciſes of Church-communion will be alike fixed, and alike occaſional, as a Mans Memberſhip of the whole Church, and as his Fellow-memberſhip of all Sound and Orthodox Parts of it, is.

As for that particular Church in which a Man lives, as his being in Communion with it, or being a Member of it in particular, gives him Right and Title to all God's Bleſſings promiſed to his Church, upon his performance of the condition of the Covenant and of the Promiſes, ſo doth it oblige him to all the Duties and Offices of a Member of that particular Church, Fellowſhip and Society, one as well as other, that is, to be ſubject to the Authority, Canons, Inſtructions, Injunctions and Cenſures thereof, as well as conſtantly to communicate with it, in Hearing, Praying, Sacraments, and all Holy Ordinances; ſo that, he that either deſpiſeth the Authority of an Eſtabliſhed Church in thoſe Canons, Inſtructions, Injunctions, or Cenſures, or that ſeparates from its Aſſemblies, and the religi-

religious Offices therein, and will not at all times partake in them, but breaks through its Unity, *ipſo facto*, that Man renounces his Memberſhip of, and Communion with it. He puts a very groſs abuſe therefore upon that Church, if he for ſecular ends thruſt himſelf at a critical time into its Society, and it's a great defect in Diſcipline if any can do this unpuniſhed. Theſe are all Principles of Catholick-unity and Church-communion, and it is impoſſible to reconcile their prevaricating occaſional communicating with the Eſtabliſhed Church to ſerve a turn, who will not hold conſtant Communion with it, pretending great ſcruples of conſcience againſt it, which they, out of a pretended tenderneſs cannot digeſt with theſe Principles, which is ſufficient to ſhew its abſurdity, and I hope the ſinfulneſs of it will be acknowledged alſo, if I can ſhew,

3. That it is not at all warranted in, but is rather contrary to the Holy Scriptures; and let them be ſearch'd from the firſt verſe in *Geneſis*, to the laſt verſe in the *Revelation*, and I will be bold to ſay, that no footſtep, either of this Diſtinction, or of its Practice can be found therein, that is, no example of any of God's Saints occaſionally communicating with any Church-Society, with which they thought they could not communicate conſtantly. Let the Separate Miniſters produce any one Text if they can, that requiring a Separation from an idolatrous or ſinful Communion, allows of an occaſional communicating with it, for what end ſoever; or let them on the other hand produce any one Text,

where the Scripture ſpeaking of Church-unity or Communion, intends leſs than what is fixed and conſtant, or that countenanceth an occaſional Communion with a true Church only. On the contrary, If Schiſm be a great Sin, as well as Idolatry, with which it is by St. *Paul* joyntly reckoned among *the Works of the Fleſh*, * ſaying, *that they that do ſuch things, ſhall in no wiſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, I may with great reaſon apply to this caſe, what the Prophet *Elijah* ſaid to the unconſtant Iſraelites, † *How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him, but if* Baal *be God, follow him:* or what our Saviour ſaid of two Maſters, ‡ that command contrary things; as *no man can ſerve two* ſuch *Maſters*, ſo can no Man communicate with two oppoſite Societies, an Orthodox Eſtabliſhed Church, and a divided Separate Church (if it may be called a Church;) for theſe are of different Conſtitutions, obſerve different ways of Divine Worſhip, have a different Government under Paſtors that are differently called to the Miniſtry: *No Man can ſerve two* ſuch contrary *Maſters*, that is, he cannot, if he act regularly, and will do his Duty, as his Station and Relation to the Church engages him: No Man can ſo hold communion with them both, *but that he muſt hate the one and love the other, or hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other.* He muſt communicate conſtantly, and not occaſionally only with the one, or with the other;

* Gal. 5. 19, 20.

† 1 Kin. 18. 21.

‡ Matt. 6. 24.

for

for a good Chriſtian hath no liberty to hold Communion ſo much as occaſionally with that Church with which he is not ſatisfied to hold conſtant Communion.

In ſhort, The example of the firſt Chriſtian Church (ſo often mentioned)
* the firſt Chriſtian Converts after the coming of the Holy Ghoſt that were formed into a Church, ſhould be all Chriſtians pattern; *they continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtle's Doctrine, Fellowſhip, breaking of Bread and Prayers.* I do therefore confidently pronounce this diſtinction of conſtant and occaſional Communion Unſcriptural, and therefore ſinful, and I think it will be no trivial or contemptible reaſon againſt it, if

* Acts 2. 42.

4. I obſerve in a word, How hateful in all civil Societies, both this Diſtinction and its Practice would be: For what Corporation or Body of Men would accept of any of its Members occaſional doing his Duty at ſome critical time for his own intereſt, whom the Charter obliges to a conſtant Duty at all times for the publick good? And, who yet walks always croſs, or perverſely, except when his intereſt inclines him to better behaviour? Or what Prince will be pleaſed with his Subject's occaſional Service, or Obedience to his commands for his own ends and advantage, who for the moſt part is in a State of Diſobedience or Rebellion? But to wave many the like parallels, it's as plain a thing as can be,

5. That all ſuch Perſons as can thus without ſcruple occaſionally communicate with the Church of *England*, are ſelf-condemned, what

ſcruples of conſcience ſoever they pretend to keep them from holding conſtant Communion with it. I have had occaſion to urge this before in my Anſwers to other Queſtions, and a repetition muſt here be granted an excuſe, the preſent Queſtion obliging to it; and this I ſay, this communicating occaſionally with the Church of *England*, ſuperſedes all pretences of tenderneſs of conſcience to palliate their Separation from it; for conſtant Communion is the unqueſtioned Duty of all that can ſatisfie themſelves, that they can lawfully communicate occaſionally: For if they can lawfully do this, they may as lawfully do that; and if they can lawfully do it, they are by the Laws of Chriſt for Peace and Unity, and againſt Diviſions and Separations bound to it, when thoſe Men pretend a greater care of their Souls than other Men: One would think they would not do that ſo much as once, upon any occaſion whatſoever, which they really believe, or but even ſuſpect to be ſinful whenever they do it: But it ſeems, they fear no Sin in communicating at that time, when they do it upon occaſion, whatever they pretend at other times, when their intereſt is not concerned: and what they think they may then do without Sin, that may they do conſtantly without Sin; and were there no other Text for it but only the Apoſtles Precept to all Chriſtians,

* Eph. 4. 3. to *endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*,

† Ibid. ver. 1. and that, that they *may walk* † *worthy of*, or as becomes *their Chriſtian Vocation*: It is ſufficient to prove it to

be

be their Duty to do what they may do without Sin, for the ſake of the Church's Unity and Peace, and certainly the Dilemma is hard upon ſuch Men; Either there is ſome ſinful thing in the Church's Communion, and then, Why do they communicate at all? Or there is no Sin in it, (which their occaſional communicating muſt make all the World think they believe) and then, Why do they ſeparate? Or how dare they ſeparate? Or why do they not with the Primitive Chriſtians continue ſtedfaſtly in the Church's Communion, which is ſo ſound and orthodox a part of the Catholick Church, that it hath no ſinful thing in it? So unhappy are theſe Men in condemning what they occaſionally allow, or occaſionally allowing themſelves in what they conſtantly condemn *. In all which they have this great additional guilt, even an Hypocritical Abuſe put upon the Eſtabliſhed Church; nay, therein upon the whole Catholick Church, Chriſt's Myſtical Body, of which the Eſtabliſhed Church is a ſound Part and Member.

* Rom. 14. 22.

Thus have I done with the greater Perſons occaſional communicating, for making themſelves capable of ſome Place of Truſt, Profit or Power in the State: But my Diſcourſe muſt not be limited to them. Men of interiour ranks, even plain Countreymen, are found to practiſe the Diſtinction of Conſtant and Occaſional Communion, though they have no knowledge of, nor at all ground their practice upon it: For ſo it is, We have many in our Pariſhes, pretend-

ing

ing no ſcruple of conſcience againſt the E
bliſhed Church's Communion, who there
for the moſt part come with their Neighb
to our Pariſh Churches, yet have a fancy
haps merely for Novelties ſake, or merely to
tifie itching Ears, or perhaps upon ſome
dental occaſion falling out to run by time
the Conventicle, for which I am ſure, they
have no juſt or warrantable occaſion. Then
thoſe on the other hand, who conſtantly
moſtly run to the Conventicle, and yet by ti
come to Church, which they do occaſion
too, having ſome Friend, Acquaintance or Cl
man to ſpeak with, whom they hope to
there, or perhaps the Conventicle is at a gre
diſtance, or ſome tempeſtuous Weather hin
them, or ſome worldly advantage, or mere
dily eaſe, or ſome extraordinary or unexpe
accident draws them to our Churches.

It will be very proper for ſuch Perſons am
the common People alſo, to conſider wel
this whole Anſwer to the 19th Queſtion,
yet I think beſt to make a new and diſtinct C
ſtion more adapted to their caſe, and my lal
will be well beſtowed in giving a ſhort pr
Anſwer to it, that they may take better nc
of, and apply it to themſelves, if it may by
Bleſſing of God awaken ſuch Men to conſ
better what they do, ſo as henceforth to
more like Church-members, that is as muc
to ſay, more Chriſtian-like, in a ſtricter C
munion with the beſt Church in the Chriſ
World.

Queſt. XX. Can thoſe Perſons be thought to do their Duty as Church-members, and as to the maintaining Catholick-unity and Church-communion, who come to Church, and go to Separate Meetings indifferently and promiſcuouſly, merely as ſome accidental occaſion, or as their humour prompts them?

Anſ. This Queſtion (as I have ſaid) is only intended for the plain Countrymans inſtruction, who underſtands little of the foreſaid Diſtinction, and that he may know what he ought to do, and what to avoid in the matter of Church-communion, and not go hoodwink'd in a crooked, perverſe, and diſorderly way of Separation, that knows no reaſon at all for it, and the Anſwer is foreſtalled by what is ſaid before, both to them who go moſtly to a Conventicle, and yet by times, as they have occaſion, come to Church without ſcruple, and to them who ſometimes pretend, that their conſciences will not ſuffer them to hold conſtant Communion with the Church of *England*, and yet communicate with it occaſionally in mere worldly policy to ſerve a turn, to both whom belong the foreſaid foul blot of ſelf-condemnation, the Argument being of equal force to them both, and it is the ſame to all them alſo, who being in the Church's boſom, would not by their good wills be eſteemed other than the Church's Members, ordinarily coming to the Church's Aſſemblies, and yet go by times

to Separate Meetings upon any occaſion th
falls out, who, how great their Sin is, and ho
much they fail in their Duty as Church-mem
bers, and as to the maintaining Catholick-unit
and Church-communion, hath been made evi
dent to any intelligent and unprejudiced Reade
in my Anſwer to the 12th Queſtion (wha
Churches they be that may be truly called Sepa
rate Churches?) And in my Anſwer to the 15t
Queſtion (Are they in duty bound to commu
nicate conſtantly with the Church of *Englan*
who own themſelves to be her Members, an
can, and do communicate with it without ſcru
ple, when they pleaſe?) And in my Anſwer al
ſo to the 16th Queſtion. (Can any good Chr
ſtian lawfully communicate with diſtinct Sepa
rate Meetings, who yet are minded to hol
Communion with the Eſtabliſhed, Orthodo
Church for the main?) And referring theſe Me
to a review of the Anſwers to theſe Queſtion
if they cannot convince them of their Sin an
Danger. There is ſmall hope of reducing ther
to, or holding them in their Duty to God an
his Church, and all we have to do, who ſee i
is to bemoan their blindneſs, headineſs or obſt
nacy, and ſo to leave them in their Sins witho
excuſe: yet have I not ſo done with them, ſom
what more I have to ſay to thoſe Men, and th
I think may fairly be reduced to two other d
ſtinct Queſtions and Anſwers.

Queſ

ieſt. XXI. What is to be thought of diſtinct Churches in the ſame Place or ? May not a good Chriſtian, living e they are, lawfully communicate with ne (while he communicates conſtantly the other) as he hath occaſion to draw to either of them, or as he affects the tter than the other?

. Never did any Orthodox Divine allow s doubting, halting, halving, or playing d looſe with any Orthodox Eſtabliſhed h whereſoever. It brings to mind the t French King's firſt beginning of his Per-n, to root out the Northern Hereſie (as ls it) out of his Kingdom, having clearly from the Proteſtants many of their hes, againſt his own Edicts for their peace-njoying them, thoſe which he left them, ired betwixt them and the Papiſts, giving for the papiſt Maſs-prieſt to enjoy the ſame h one part of the day, which the Prote-Miniſter occupied the other, but the end reſently this, the poor Proteſtants were ſoon ly baniſhed out of all. What wife and Chriſtian will any more like of Chriſtians g their Church-communion, than of the its ſharing the Churches themſelves? The ſture is very reaſonable; nay, it may be than a Conjecture, That the profeſſed ers of the Church of *England*, are in ma-danger of loſing their Religion by ſharing Communion.

But

But to ſpeak more cloſely to the caſe
us: This I ſay, Let but the well-meaning
tryman attain a right apprehenſion of th
notion of two ſuch diſtinct and ſeparate Co
nions, and he will eaſily be of himſelf (eſp
if he have had any ſerious conſideration of
hath been ſaid in anſwer to the former Que
able to reſolve what he may, or what h
not lawfully do, when there are two ſu
ſtinct Separate Communions in the Pariſh
he lives: For when he hath toſſed it ov
over in his thought, the matter will co
this iſſue; That one of thoſe Communions
of neceſſity be in the wrong, and a very S
and he cannot communicate with them
but he muſt become a Schiſmatick, or a
muſt partake in a Schiſm, and no good Ch
that at all underſtands what he doth, will
himſelf ſo much as but to partake in a Sc
or with Schiſmaticks.

No other rule of Church-communion h
ny the leaſt grain of ſobriety in it beſide
viz. every Chriſtian as a Member of the C
lick Church, is bound conſtantly to comm
cate with that particular Orthodox C
wherein he lives conſtantly; and for other C
or Churches, there can be no other occa
communicating with any of them allowed c
this, That if a Chriſtians lawful occaſions
him into any other ſound and orthodox
bliſhed Church, whereſoever it be, he ma
caſionally communicate where he is occaſio
or accidentally preſent, becauſe he is a Me
of Chriſt's Church all the World over. B

caſe the ſame Perſon happens to remove his Habitation thither, and his occaſional preſence there become a conſtant ſettlement, then muſt Occaſional Communion turn to a conſtant Communion alſo; it will be his Duty then to communicate conſtantly as a fixed Member of the Catholick Church, with that orthodox part thereof where he is conſtantly preſent, and not by fits or ſtarts, or occaſionally only; for if he only communicate occaſionally there where his dwelling is, it will be like a Mans living occaſionally only in his own Houſe, which all Men will account a great fault, becauſe it ſignifies a Mans being for the moſt part a ſtranger at his home without any need for it. In our caſe it can be no leſs than a Sin of Omiſſion, that is, a not doing what ought to be done, for ſuch a Man only doth that ſometimes, which he ought to do always. In ſhort, a conſtant Communion is every Chriſtians Duty with that ſound and orthodox part of the Catholick Church where his abode and reſidence is, and the only ſinleſs occaſional Communion is with another orthodox Church, where he is only for a time, by accident upon his lawful Occaſions. But if it be either conſtant or occaſional with any Separate Church of a different or oppoſite Communion in the ſame Nation, Place, or Pariſh, it is doubtleſs ſchiſmatical and ſinful; for when a Man makes two diſtinct Churches in the ſame Nation, Place or Pariſh, (The one (ſuppoſe) for Conſtant, the other for Occaſional Communion) he muſt be guilty of no leſs than Schiſm in the one of them: ſo that if any Perſon go conſtantly to the Conventicle, and

and come occaſionally to the Church, he can acquit himſelf of a damnable Schiſm; And any Perſon come conſtantly, or for the moſt p to the Church, and go occaſionally to the C venticle, he cannot acquit himſelf of the guil encouraging and abetting, and at the leaſt p taking in a Schiſm, both of them are alike i poſſible: but becauſe ſomething may be obje ed againſt this Aſſertion, therefore to leav unexceptionable, and to obviate ſuch Objec ons, I think it needful to add one or two m Queſtions, which otherwiſe might well enou be ſpared.

Queſt. XXII. Is there no good ſen wherein a Chriſtian may be truly ſaid to a Member of a particular Church, conſid red as diſtinct from other particular Church and what is that ſenſe?

Anſ. A Chriſtian may be truly ſaid to be Member of that particular Church wherein lives, conſidered as diſtinct from other partic lar Churches, as he is peculiarly under the G vernment and Diſcipline there Eſtabliſhed, whi is a very needful remark, becauſe it hath be often ſaid, *That every Chriſtian is by his Bapti a Member of the whole Catholick Church, a conſequently in Communion with it.* Now ſtate the thing aright, on the one Hand, I affir That every Chriſtian is of Right under the ir mediate Inſpection, Inſtruction and Gover ment of his own particular Biſhop, and Paſto

or Paſtors in conjunction with his Biſhop, notwithſtanding his being a Member of, and in Communion with the whole Catholick Church, and he is in duty bound to a perſonal, actual Communion with him and them.

For it is this that conſtitutes a particular Church, That all Acts of Divine Worſhip, Diſcipline and Government in a certain Region or Country, are under the Conduct and Orders of a certain particular Biſhop, with his Presbyters. And when Neighbouring Biſhops and Presbyters unite in One Body, and agree upon certain Rules or Canons, for governing their Churches or Congregations, or upon One Method in managing religious Exerciſes in them: This conſtitutes a particular National Church, and by ſubmitting themſelves to thoſe Rules, and to the Government of ſuch United Biſhops, with their Presbyters, Men become Members of the National Church, and of particular Dioceſan Churches in that National Church, conſidered as diſtinct from other National and Dioceſan Churches, and are ſtrictly obliged to the Worſhip, Diſcipline and Government there eſtabliſhed, provided nothing be impoſed there that is really inconſiſtent with God's Word, or with the Principles of Catholick Unity and Communion. But then, we muſt take this along with us on the other hand, That no Chriſtians Church-memberſhip or Communion is hereby confined to the particular Church he lives in, becauſe every Act of religious Worſhip performed there, upon account whereof, a Chriſtian is peculiarly related to that Church as an immediate Member, is an Act of

Catholick-communion with the whole C
and every ſound part of it all the World
From hence it is, That notwithſtan
Chriſtians being peculiarly related to a pa
Church where he abides and inhabits, he
a Church Member freely communicate w
other orthodox Church into which he trav
whether it be in the Church where he l
another whither he comes by accident, v
he communicates, his communicating is
of the ſame nature, that is, he commun
them both as a Member of the Catholick
and in no other notion in either of them
he hath no Right to joyn in either Co
on, but that of a Member, and no relig
in either of the Churches can be an Act
munion, if he be not a Church-mem
do not own himſelf to be ſo, that perf
which leads me to the laſt Queſtion.

Queſt. XXIII. Is there no go
wherein a Chriſtian may be ſaid to
nicate with another particular Churc
ſionally, being no Member of that
and what ſenſe is that?

Anſ. It is only when a Man perfor
ous Worſhip in ſome ſound and
Church, whither providence brings h
his lawful occaſions, and ſo, where he
time occaſionally preſent, which hath
before, but is here brought in anſwer to
Queſtion, on purpoſe to obviate what
geſt in Plea for Occaſional Commun
this Occaſional Communion here all

doth in no wiſe countenance an Occaſional Communion with that particular Orthodox Church in the ſame Place, Kingdom, Country or Pariſh where a Man lives, with which he refuſeth to communicate conſtantly upon account of his needleſs ſcruples, for this is apparently a different caſe.

And ſo is that too, when a Chriſtian hath ſeveral Houſes in ſeveral Pariſhes, or perhaps in diſtinct Dioceſſes, or when he travels into other parts of the ſame Country, or when he joyns in Prayers, or receives the Lord's Supper in another Pariſh Church, communicating accidently with the Chriſtian Inhabitants there, all which may be truly called Occaſional Communion, without the leaſt appearance of Schiſm or Separation, becauſe they are ſtill a communicating with the ſame National Church, whereof a Chriſtian is a profeſſed Member, and with Churches of the ſame Communion, with that he lives in, and not with any Separate Church of a different Communion, whereof a Man is no Member.

Where it may be very fitting to take a diſtinct notice of the laſt mentioned caſe, Mens going to other Pariſh Churches, which is very allowable when their own Pariſh Church is much further diſtant, and when they have their own Miniſters expreſs or implicite conſent; but may be very culpable, and againſt all good order, if their own Church be not too far diſtant, or if Pariſhioners do it too often, without any need for it, or when they do it out of ill-will, or contempt of their own proper Miniſter, or to his Diſcouragement, to whom they owe Duty and Obedience, both

by the Laws of God and his Church, ar
joy and cheerfulneſs in his Miniſterial I
they ought by all lawful means to ſtu
deavour and promote, as is evident by
the Apoſtle; * *Obey t*
* Heb. 13. 17. *have the rule over you,*
mit your ſelves, for they
your Souls, as they that muſt give an acc
they may do it with joy, and not with g
that is unprofitable for you. In theſe re
ſay) Pariſhioners going to other Pariſh
is very blame-worthy, and yet no Man
that they are Schiſmaticks that do ſo;
though ſuch communicating with oth
Churches may well be called Occaſiona
ally when they for the moſt part keep
own Pariſh Churches, yet is it a quite
caſe from that of a Presbyterians or Inde
occaſional communicating with th
Churches only to ſerve a turn, being,
tinuing a profeſſed Member of a Separate
or a Schiſmatical Faction, and therewi
ing conſtant Communion, and ſo it is
ferent caſe from any ones occaſional
Separate Meetings, who uſually comes t
for in the former caſe a Man communic
Churches of the ſame Communion in
riſhes, and being a Member of one P
is a Member of all other Pariſhes of
Communion, and he ſtill communic
Member of the National Church in w
Pariſh he be. But in the latter caſe, A
terian, or an Independent being a Men
feſſedly of thoſe Separate Churches, ca

ſibly ſo much as occaſionally communicate in any Pariſh Church as a Member, becauſe the ſame Perſon cannot be a Member of two diſtinct and Separate Churches, and no Act of Religion or Divine Worſhip that a Man performs in any Church, of which he is no Member, can in any good ſenſe be accounted of as an Act of Communion with it. Now to conclude, O what matter of Joy would it be to me, if by the Bleſſing of God I may find ſome kindly effect of this my Travail! That is, If ſuch Perſons as Atheiſt-like reſort to no ſort of Religious Aſſemblies, would be thereby induced to conſider better of their indiſpenſable Duty, which is certainly no leſs than a conſtant, external, actual communicating with the Church of God in all Holy Offices and Adminiſtrations, which they muſt do, unleſs they will at once interpretatively renounce their Baptiſm, their Church-memberſhip and their Chriſtianity, and be of the number of them that live without God in the World.

And if all inconſiderate and inconſiſtent Perſons that come to Church, and withal by turns, and in their humour go to Conventicles, having wanton and itching Ears, and heaping up Teachers to themſelves, would be perſuaded to a better conſideration of their Duty, and of their Danger, of that ſtrict Obligation that lies upon them as Church-members, or (which in effect is the ſame) as Chriſtians to continue in the Communion of the Eſtabliſhed Orthodox Church wherein they live, leaſt they provoke God to give them up in juſt judgment to ſtrong De-

luſions for not receivi
* 2 Theſ. 2. 10, 11. Truth in the love theree
leaſt they commence Schi
in a little time, or leſt
the leaſt for the preſent partake in the di
Sin of Schiſm.

And if ſuch Perſons as go conſtantly
rate Meetings, would be hereby engaged
rious conſideration, as of the many Ap
Exhortations to Chriſtians, and to the C
to whom the Apoſtles wrote their ſeve
ſtles, to the ſtricteſt mutual Love,
Unity and Peace, ſo of their moſt earneſ
fectionate Dehortations from, and the
Characters by them given of all Schiſm,
tions and Diviſions. (And plainly, it is
derful thing, That any ſort of Men wl
all converſant in the Scriptures, ſhou
look all theſe, as if they in no wiſe
ed them.) If God will be graciouſly
to bleſs theſe my Labours, with theſe,
of theſe good Effect, What can it leſs
matter of the greateſt Joy to me? But
God the Father, the Son and the Holy G
all the Glory, Honour and Praiſe, and th
without end.

To obtain which conſideration from
fore-mentioned Parties, I would only ta
to annex (as is very proper) a few Pa
two moſt Eminent and moſt Ancient
and Martyrs, St. *Cyprian* and St. *Ignat*
then I ſhall commit all to the Bleſſing c

1. St. *Cyprian*'s Authority cannot chooſe but influence all Men that have any meaſure of Humility, Soberneſs, or Reverence to our Fathers in the Faith. He was Biſhop of *Carthage* in *Africa*, in the 248th year of Our Lord, who, after he had wheathered out divers Storms of Perſecution under the Emperors, *Valerius* and *Galienus* was proſcribed, baniſhed, and at laſt ſentenced to be beheaded, which he ſuffered with the greateſt Joy: How generous his behaviour was, and how becoming a Perſon truly Apoſtolical upon theſe great occaſions, is worth all Mens notice, of which therefore I ſhall not grudge the pains to give this ſhort account.

When *Aſpacius Paterculus*, the Proconſul of *Aſia* baniſhed him with theſe Words, *That it was the Emperor's Orders to command all that were of a foreign Religion to worſhip the Gods according to the Roman Rites, and therefore he muſt know his Reſolution:* S. *Cyprian* ſtoutly anſwered, "I am a Chriſtian and a Biſhop, I "acknowledge no other Gods but one only "true God, who made Heaven and Earth, and "all that therein is: This is he whom we Chri-"ſtians ſerve, to whom we pray night and day "for our ſelves, and for all Men, and for the "proſperity and happineſs of the Emperors. *And is that then thy reſolution*, ſaid the Proconſul? *That reſolution* (replyed the Martyr) *which is founded in God cannot be altered.*

The like magnanimous Anſwer he made to a new Proconſul, *Galerius Maximus*, when he even paſſed the ſentence of Death upon him. *Art thou that* Cyprian, ſaith the Proconſul, *who haſt*

been Biſhop and Father to Men of an impious mind? The Sacred Emperors command thee to Sacrifice; be well adviſed, and do not throw away thy Life. "I am a Chriſtian, (replyed "the Martyr) and I cannot Sacrifice to the "Gods; do as thou art commanded; as for me, "in ſo juſt a matter, there needs no conſultati-"on. At which reſolute Anſwer and Conſtan-cy of his, the Proconſul being angry, he pronounced the Sentence upon him, ſaying, *That he had been a long time of his ſacrilegious humour, nay, that he had ſeduced abundance of Men into that wicked Conſpiracy, and ſhown himſelf an Enemy to the Gods, and to the Religion of the Roman Empire, one whom the Pious Emperors could never reduce to an Obſervance of their Holy Rites, who being therefore the Author and Ring-leader of ſo heinous a Crime, he ſhould be made an Example of, to thoſe whom he had ſeduced into ſo great Wickedneſs, and the ſeverity of Diſcipline ſhould be eſtabliſhed in his Blood.* Whereupon reading the Sentence, The Holy Martyr anſwered, "I "thank thee, Almighty God, who art pleaſed "to ſet me free from the Chain of this Body. This was in the Year 258, and it was not much above 200 Years after Our Lord's Aſcenſion into Heaven, that this admirable Biſhop flouriſhed.

Now ſee how zealous our glorious Martyr was for the Church's Unity, and againſt all Schiſm and Separation whom you will find, even denying the Honour of Martyrdom to any guilty of them. Now upon occaſion of two turbulent Presbyters: *Feliciſſimus* and *Fortunatus* diſturbing

: Church's Peace, he wrote thus to *Corne-*
ſhop of *Rome.* " If it be
my deareſt Brother) that *Epiſt. 59.*
oldneſs of evil Men is to
ared, and that which wicked Perſons are
able to compaſs by Right and Equity,
will effect by Raſhneſs and Deſpair; the
: of Epiſcopacy, and the ſublime Divine
er of the Church's Government is loſt,
ner can we continue Chriſtians any longer
come to this, that we muſt be afraid of
Threatnings and Snares of profligate
rches. Where is to be obſerved, That as
rian calls the Diſturbers of the Church's
evil Men, and wicked Perſons, and pro-
Wretches, ſo he magnifies Epiſcopacy as
blime Divine Power of the Church's Go-
ent which he eſteemed ſo neceſſary, that
nounced it impoſſible for any to continue
ians any longer, if Presbyters ſhould once
to this to contemn its Authority.

: like fervent zeal for the Superiority of
os above Presbyters, and againſt Schiſm
e ſeen in divers of his Epi-
, and particularly upon oc- † *Epiſt.* 21.
of *Novatianus*'s oppoſing 22, 26, 28,
ius; and upon that pro- 30, 31, 33.
of our Saviour, *Matt.* 18. 34, 35, 38.
Where two or three are ga- 39, 52, 65.
! together in my name, there 69. 75.
in the midſt of them. He
theſe memorable Sayings,
ng all Separate and Schiſmatical Meetings

to

* *De unit. Eccleſiæ. Quomodò poſſunt duo aut tres in nomine Chriſti collegi quos conſtat à Chriſto & ab ejus Eccleſiâ ſeparari cum Hæreſes & Schiſmata nata ſint, dum Conventicula ſibi diverſa conſtituunt, veritatis caput & originem reliquerunt.*

† *Non Homines ab Eccleſia dividit qui fecit & inſtituit eccleſiam, ſed exprobrans diſcordiam*

to have any Title to, o
in that gracious promiſe
" can they be met to
" the name of Chriſt
" who, it is manifeſt a
" ted from Chriſt
" Church? For when
" and Schiſms are ſpr
" while they make, o
" and appoint divers,
" and ſeparate Conver
" themſelves, they hav
" the Head or Fo
" Truth. And to en
ther of his Sayings, witl
tle liberty of Paraphraſe
deſcants upon the for
miſe. † " In making
" gracious promiſe (ſa
" could not be our Lo
" tion to divide Men
" Church, which he hi
" made and inſtitute
" purchaſing it with
" blood: But he rathe
" ing the Diſcord of tl
" ous, and commendi
" and Unity to the Fai

perfidis & fidelibus pacem ſuâ voce con oſtendit magis eſſe cum duobus aut tribu ter orantibus, quàm cum decedentibus pluſq; impetrari poſſe paucorum conc quàm diſcordi multorum oratione.

" his own mouth, plainly ſheweth, That he " will rather be with two or three unanimous " in Prayer, than with the multitudes of them " that depart or ſeparate themſelves from them, " and that much more may be obtained of God " by the agreeing Prayers of a few peaceable " Chriſtians, than by the jarring Prayers of ma- " ny, who have divided themſelves into Sides " and Parties and Factions. By which Sayings of this Holy Father and Martyr any ordinary Perſon may diſcern his notion of Schiſm, and its danger: and now be pleaſed to read his Senſe and Cenſure of its ſinfulneſs, and it is evident by what you have juſt now read, that he did not think them met together in the Name of Chriſt, or that Chriſt would be in the midſt of them, (according as they too often abuſe this his promiſe) who ſeparated from his Church, and were gathered together in Conventicles out of his Church's Communion. But more than this, you will find him very poſitive in affirming, that though ſuch Men as were guilty of Schiſm ſhould even ſuffer Martyrdom for the Name of Chriſt, yet could not the blot and ſtain of Schiſm be waſhed away in their Blood. His Words in Engliſh are theſe, " * The grie- " vous and inexpiable fault of " Diſcord and Separation cannot " be purged away by the moſt " bitter Paſſion or Suffering. And again, † " He cannot be a Mar- " tyr that is not in the Church,

* *Inexpiabilis & gravis culpa Diſcordiæ nec paſſione purgatur.*

† *Eſſe Martyr non poteſt, qui in Eccleſia non eſt.*

" that

" that is, who is not a Member of; and in
" munion with the Church, and for this l
no leſs than S. *Paul's* Autl
* *Though I give my Body*
*1 Cor. 13.2. *burned, and have not Char*
profits me nothing: And ſin
† Eph. 4. 3, precept of Chriſtians †
4. *vouring to keep the Unity*
Spirit in the Bond of Peac
that unto them as Church-members, (for h
them there of the One Body.) He cann
a Martyr for Chriſt or for the truth of hi
ſpel, that is not careful to maintain Unit
Chriſt's Church, which is the One Body,
firm Charity with his Fellow-members in i
all which, I will only add one more Sayi
this moſt Holy Father, "
‡ *Ad regnum pervenire non poteſt, qui eam quæ regnatura eſt derelinquit.* " cannot come into the Kin
" of God (he ſaith) (whicl
much as if he had ſaid, *H*
be damned) " who forſak
Church, that is, to reign
Kingdom. Thus far St. *Cypr*

And if any Authority be greater tha
next to the Apoſtles, it muſt be that of the
ſed *Ignatius*. He was (as *Euſebius* tells
Diſciple even of the Apoſtle S. *John*, and t
cond Biſhop of *Antioch* after S. *Peter*, *E*
immediately preceding him. He preſided
that Church almoſt 40 Years, whereby it is
too certain, that he converſed with ſome c
Apoſtles beſides S. *John*, whoſe Diſciple he
for it is ſcarcely probable, that he ſhould b
ſhop till he was 40 Years old, and conſequ

he muſt be born long before our Saviour's Death. The Times were moſt ſtormy and tempeſtuous wherein he governed that Church, and all the while he impatiently longed for Martyrdom; for he reckoned, that without it he could not attain perfection in the love of Jeſus Chriſt, nor fill up the meaſures and duty of a true Diſciple, and yet all this while, even ſitting at the Stern, he avoided the dangers, threatned the Chriſtians by his patient Prayers and Tears with Faſtings, and his pains was moſt indefatigable in ſtrengthening the weak, leaſt they ſhould be overcome by the Storm, and faint under the cruelty of the Perſecution. Now when the Emperor *Trajan*, being ſwollen with his great Victories, look'd upon it as an affront to himſelf, and a diminiſhing of his Glory by them all, to be gainſayed in his idolatrous Commands by the Chriſtians, and therefore reſolved to make them ſtoop and bow by a terrible Perſecution. This Divine Perſon, S. *Ignatius* preſented himſelf unto the Emperor of his own accord, and had with him a particular long Diſcourſe, boldly aſſerting, "That the Gods of the *Gentiles* were no better "than Devils, there being but one ſupreme God "that made the World, and his only begotten "Son Jeſus Chriſt, who, though Crucified un-"der *Pontius Pilate*, had nevertheleſs deſtroyed "him that had the Power of Sin and Death, "even the Devil, and who would ruin the "whole Power and Empire of the *Dæmons*, "treading them under the feet of them that "carried God in their Hearts. Whereupon, he was firſt caſt into Priſon, where for the conſtan-

cy

cy and reſolution of his Profeſſion, l
the moſt mercileſs Torments, for he
ped with Scourges, h
Plumbets. lets of Lead at their enc
ced to hold Fire in l
while his Sides were burned with Pape
Oyl, his Feet ſet upon live Coals, anc
torn off with burning Pincers; all wh
ties he overcame with invincible pat
length the Emperor pronounced the
tence upon him, *That being incurabl*
with Superſtition, he ſhould be carrie
Soldiers to Rome, *and there be throw*
Beaſts for a prey. At which the Hol
rejoyced, ſaying, *I thank thee, O Lord,*
haſt condeſcended thus perfectly to honor
thy love, and haſt thought me worthy n
ſtle Paul *to be bound with Iron Chains,*
embraced chearfully, and praying fer
his Church, which with Tears he co
to the Divine Care and Providence,
red up himſelf into the hands of his
who were appointed to tranſport him
and tedious Journey to the place of E
With what inhumanity the Soldiers tre
all the way, on purpoſe to make hin
and recant if poſſible, may be ſeen in h
to the *Romans*: " From *Syria* even
" (ſaith he) both by Sea and by Lan
" with Beaſts: Night and Day I am
" to two Leopards (which is my Militar
" who, the kinder I am to them,
" cruel and fierce they are to me.

The Hiſtory of his Journey and of his Paſſion are marvellous affecting to any godly-minded Man, of which I thought good to give theſe ſhort Strictures, believing it would be very profitable to the well-meaning Country-man to be better acquainted with the Hiſtory of the Noble Army of Martyrs, of whom many were good Biſhops, which moſt Honourable Title and Office is in our days ſo vilely eſteemed of, through the inſidious Workings of the Separatiſts of our Age. But I will no longer detain the Reader from what I intend. This Apoſtolical Perſon having with St. *Paul* a care of all the Churches, diſpatched ſeveral admirable Epiſtles to the Churches in his Journey to *Rome*; the credit of thoſe which we receive for Genuine and Authentick, hath been ſufficiently vindicated by the Learned *Voſſius*, by the moſt Reverend Primate *Uſher*, and of late beyond all contradiction by the Incomparable Doctor *Pearſon*, late Lord Biſhop of *Cheſter*.

If I ſhould produce all the Paſſages in theſe Epiſtles, that preſs the Churches he wrote unto, to Love and Unity, moſt vehemently cautioning them againſt all Schiſms and Diviſions, I might almoſt fill my Book with them, and yet not write all. I ſhall therefore cull out only ſome few, deſiring the Reader only to bear in mind his juſt Character, which verily makes his Authority next to Apoſtolical, and if ever any one deſerved the high Epitaph of a Divine Perſon, in regard of a moſt fervent Zeal for Truth and Piety

Relation of his Martyrdom.

Piety in all the Primitive Churches, t
For being (if any credit be due to I
cal Hiſtory) ſet in the See of *Antioch*, t
the Metropolis of *Syria*, by the Apoſ
ſelves as a good Governour, he by the
his Prayers and Tears with Faſting, a
conſtancy of his Doctrine and Spiritual
oppoſed himſelf to the Flood of all the
of the Adverſaries of Chriſtianity, and
vine Lamp illuminated the Hearts of
ful by his Expoſition of the Scripture
all reſpects he is repreſented like an Apo
in life and death.

I ſhall quote his Words according t
Wake's Tranſlation, and to give but a
ſages in thoſe Epiſtles that are undoul
nuine: See firſt what he wrote to the
" He (ſaith he) that is within the Alta
" wherefore he is alſo obedient to the B
" Presbyters. And again, ye ought
" of you to cheriſh your Biſhop. An
" in his Epiſtle to the *Magneſians* ſpok
" *mas* their Biſhop, he exhorts the
" contemn him for his Age, but (ſaith
" him all Reverence according to th
" God the Father, as I know the Hol
" ters do, not looking on the Youth
" pears in him, but the Prudence whic
" received from the Lord: And to t
" *delphians* thus, Let the Deacons ol
" Prieſts, and the Prieſts their Biſhop,
" Biſhop Chriſt, as Chriſt obeys the
By which Paſſages any one may appreh
ſort of Church-government there was

the Churches, and by them, and more eſpecially by what follows, is manifeſt what notion he had of the Sin of Schiſm, and how great he thought its guilt and danger, and if he was not miſtaken therein, the Hearts of them that cauſe Diviſions, and of them that follow thoſe that cauſe Diviſions, may juſtly bleed and tremble, their Eyes weep to read, or their Ears tingle to hear what his ſenſe was of Separate Churches, and of them that communicate with Separate Churches. I will but recite what he ſaith in two of his Epiſtles more, hoping that their being ſo appoſite to our Subject as they are; will apologize for the length of the Quotations.

" I ſpeak to you (ſaith he in his Epiſtle to
' the *Epheſians*) as Fellow-diſciples with me,
' being bound for Chriſt's Name, yet am I not
' perfect in Chriſt Jeſus; but foraſmuch as
' Charity ſuffers me not to be ſilent towards
' you, I have taken upon me to exhort you,
' that ye would all run together according to
' the Will of God: For Jeſus Chriſt, our inſe-
' parable Life, is the mind of the Father, as the
' Biſhops appointed even to the utmoſt bounds
' of the Earth, are the mind of Jeſus Chriſt;
' wherefore it will become you to run together
' according to the Will of your Biſhop, as alſo
' ye do, for your famous Presbyters, worthy of
' God, is fitted as exactly to the Biſhop, as
' the Strings are to the Harp. Therefore in
' your Concord and agreeing Charity, Jeſus
' Chriſt is ſung, and every ſingle Perſon among
' you makes up the Chorus; that ſo, being all

' conſonant in Love and Concord, an
' up the Song of God, you may with or
' and with a perfect Unity ſing to the
' of Jeſus Chriſt; to the end, that by t
' he may both hear, yea, and perceive
' Works, that ye are indeed Membe
' Son, wherefore it is profitable for
' live in an unblameable Unity, that ſc
' always have a Fellowſhip with Goe
' thus he goes on there) How happy
' think you, who are joyned to you
' as the Church to Jeſus Chriſt, and Jeſ
' to the Father, that ſo all things m
' in the ſame Unity? Let no Man dece
' ſelf; if a Man be not within the Alt
' deprived of the Bread of God; f
' Prayer of one or two be of ſuch fo
' are told, *Matt.* 18. 19. How mu
' powerful ſhall that of the Biſhop
' whole Church be? He therefore that
' come together in the ſame place
' proud, and hath already condemne
' for it is written, *God reſiſteth the pr*
' us therefore take heed that we do n
' ſelves againſt the Biſhop, that w
' ſubject to God; for whomſoever th
' of the Houſe ſends to his Houſhold,
' in like manner to receive him, as
' receive him that ſent him. It is ver
' that we ought to look upon the Biſ
, as we would upon the Lord Jeſus C
ſelf; and in the like manner doth the
tyr go on there (not to tranſcribe t

both to warn them to take heed of ſuch as carried about them the name of Chriſt in deceitfulneſs, doing many things unworthy of God, and to commend their good Order and Unity in God, no Hereſie dwelling among them (*for they ſtopped their Ears* (he ſaith) *to all that would ſow any perverſe Doctrine*) and to exhort them to perſevere therein to the end; *for* (ſaith he) *ſo long as there is no contention or ſtrife among you to trouble you, my Soul for yours, ye muſt needs live according to the Will of God.* I have quoted one place before in his Epiſtle to the *Philadelphians*, and I find cauſe to take further notice of that Epiſtle, where having in his Preface expreſſed his Joy for their Unity with their Biſhop, and the Presbyters that were with him, and the Deacons appointed according to the mind of Jeſus Chriſt. 'He preſently afterwards exhorts 'them to flee Diviſions and falſe Doctrines as 'becomes the Children of the Light and of 'the Truth, and where your Shepherd is, there '(ſaith he) do ye (as Sheep) follow after: for 'there are many Wolves who ſeem worthy of 'belief, yet with a falſe and an evil pleaſure, lead 'Captive thoſe that run in the courſe of God, 'but in your Concord they ſhall find no place. 'Abſtain therefore (as he goes on) from thoſe 'evil Herbs, which Jeſus Chriſt doth not dreſs, 'becauſe ſuch are not the Plantation of the Father; for as many as are of Jeſus Chriſt are alſo 'with their Biſhop, and as many as ſhal with 'repentance return into the Unity of the Church, 'even thoſe ſhall be Servants of God, that they

'may live according to Jeſus Chriſt: but if any Man follow (ſee Reader, ſee the Holy Martyr's ſeverity in cenſuring Separatiſts) if any Man follow him that makes a Schiſm in the Church, *he ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*, and if any one walk after any others Opinion, he agrees not with the Paſſion of Chriſt. Thus conſtantly doth this Apoſtolical Perſon make Mens forſaking their Biſhop to be the Sin of Schiſm, and I may not omit how he argues in the very next Paragraph: 'Wherefore let it be your endeavour to partake of the ſame Holy Euchariſt, for there is but one Fleſh of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and one Cup unto the Unity of his Blood, one Altar, as alſo there is one Biſhop, together with his Presbyters, and the Deacons my fellow Servants, that ſo, *whatſoever ye do, ye may do it according to the Will of God.* All which he concludes with a proteſtation of his Love to them, and their danger if they do not obſerve it, even as if Jeſus Chriſt himſelf ſhould give it them. 'My Brethren (ſaith he) the love I have towards you makes me the more large (in the Margin in Dr. *Wake*'s Tranſlation, it is very much poured out) and having great Joy in you, I endeavour to ſecure you from danger, or rather not I, but Jeſus Chriſt, in whom being bound, I the more fear as being yet in the way of Suffering.

Diverſe other Paſſages to the ſame purpoſe there are in thoſe admirable Epiſtles of this glorious Martyr and Servant of God, and abundance

dance of the ſame nature in the Writings of other Holy Fathers and Martyrs of the Primitive Church, but either theſe will awaken well-meaning People, who unadviſedly inſnare themſelves in Schiſms, Separations and Diviſions from the Orthodox Church we live in, to a more ſerious Conſideration of their Error, Sin and Danger, or there will be ſmall hopes of other Authorities doing it, though I ſhould fill a whole Volume with them.

To conclude, I preſume every good Chriſtian will acknowledge it to be his Duty daily, and moſt fervently to *Pray for the peace of* Jeruſalem *, *viz.* that the God of Peace, the great Lover of Concord, would of his great Mercy and Goodneſs, give, and reſtore, and eſtabliſh perfect Peace, Unity, and brotherly Love and Charity to his whole Catholick Church, and more particularly to this moſt Orthodox Part of it, the beſt of Reformed Churches, wherein we live (in the Words of our pious Litany) *that all who profeſs his Holy Name may agree in the Truth of his moſt Holy Word, and may live* (in an unfeigned Concord) *in Unity and godly Love*; and if it could be obtained of the Separatiſts to make more uſe of that moſt perfect Form of Prayer which our Lord taught his Diſciples, and required of them, and of us all in them, when they prayed to ſay, than they either uſe to do, or (out of groundleſs prejudice againſt all Forms of Prayer) will allow of. And did they then underſtand it in its true

* Pſal. 122. 7.

and comprehenſive meaning? they will undoubtedly find, that this Catholick Unity and Church Communion is what is prayed for, and all Schiſm, Separation and Diviſion is prayed againſt in the ſecond Petition (*Thy Kingdom come*) and alſo, according to St. *Ignatius* his Notion of doing the Will of God, as alſo according to the Nature of the Thing in the third Petition (*Thy Will be done in Earth as it is done in Heaven.*) And then, foraſmuch as all Mens Endeavours ought to anſwer and to be conformable to their Prayers; for if Men endeavour not what they pray for, they do but diſſemble with God: This only thing ſingly conſidered is ſufficient to engage Men to this as their unqueſtioned and indiſpenſible Duty, even as ever they will approve their ſincerity in their Prayers to God, to take their utmoſt heed as of dividing, or making any Schiſms or Diviſions in his Church, ſo of following, joyning with, or communicating with Schiſmaticks, or any that cauſe, or are but in a Schiſm or Diviſion; for whoſoever will practiſe as he prayeth, or at leaſt as he ought to pray, he muſt unite himſelf cloſely to that particular Sound and Orthodox Eſtabliſhed Church where he liveth, there being no other way for him to unite to the whole Catholick Church, to which all ſhall be added that ſhall be ſaved *, for of that Church is every particular Sound and Orthodox National Church a Part and Member: *And bleſſed are thoſe Eyes that ſhall ſee this Catholick Unity, Which*

* Acts 2. 47.

Which the God of Peace, the Lover of Concord, grant, That as there is but One Body, One Spirit, and One Hope of our Calling, One Lord, One Faith, One Baptiſm, One God and Father of us all, ſo we may all be henceforth ſo ſenſible of the great Sin and Danger of our unhappy Diviſions as henceforth we may (if it be God's bleſſed Will) be all of one Heart and of one Soul, knit together in the Holy Bands of Truth and Peace, mutual Love and Charity, and with one Mind and one Mouth glorifie God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, To whom with the Moſt Holy Spirit, be all Honour, Glory and Praiſe for ever more. Amen. Amen.

FINIS.

THE CONTENTS

PREFACE.

SEparation from an Eſtabliſhed Church is no but a Chriſtians Duty in caſe of Idol Hereſie and Tyranny. The Church of R is juſtly charged with theſe, for the which we teſtants do juſtly renounce her Communion, the Church of England *cannot juſtly be cha with any of them.*

A good Miniſter cannot chooſe but ſadly re his Peoples running to Separate Meetings, he cannot excuſe himſelf from the utmoſt en vour to reduce them that actually ſeparate preſerve them from Separation who are yet in Church's Communion.

His care and endeavour moſtly proves in which occaſions this Diſcourſe.

*Many common People are apt to run into, to live in Schiſm and Separation through an Opinion of the Teachers and Peoples ſeeming ſineſs that are in Separate Meetings, but gre the danger as well as vanity of being miſled her

As godly Men as any of them can be, have given their Teſtimony for the Church of Englands *being ſound and orthodox, and have pronounced Schiſm and Separation to be a Sin, and a damnable Sin, namely, our Glorious Martyrs, the moſt Eminent Divines in the Reformed Churches, the old Non-conformiſts, and many Diſſenters of chief Note in this preſent Age.*

The Author's deſign in this Diſcourſe.

The Queſtions anſwered, and their Anſwers in this Diſcourſe.

Queſt. 1. *What is a Church?*

Anſ. *The Church is a Body, or a Society of Men called to Faith and Repentance, united to God, and to one another by a Divine Covenant. The Goſpel Covenant is the Foundation of the Chriſtian Church.*

Queſt. 2. *What is it to be a Member of the Chriſtian Church?*

Anſ. *Men are received into the Church of Chriſt, and become Members of the Chriſtian Church, by being taken into Covenant with God in Chriſt, and to be ſo taken into Covenant with God in Chriſt, and to be received into Chriſt's Church, or to become Church-members are one and the ſame thing.*

Queſt. 3. *How or when are Men viſibly taken into Covenant with God, and thereby made Members of the viſible Church of God?*

Anſ. *In their Baptiſm, where note, it is not ſo in the Independant Conſtitution, for being taken into*

into God's Covenant with God in Baptiſm, will not ſerve the turn to admit Men as Members into an Independent Church, for Men muſt enter alſo into a particular Covenant with a particular Paſtor or Miniſter, which is but an Humane, not a Divine Covenant, and makes the Church an Humane Creature or Conſtitution, and which in effect makes Baptiſm of no effect to make Men Chriſtians, and which makes baptized Perſons no Chriſtians, unleſs they enter into that particular Covenant and become Independants. Now this is unſcripturał, and open Separation is the conſequent of it, for by this means they gather Churches out of Churches, wherein the Presbyterians have of late imitated them, though not by ſuch a Covenant.

Queſt. 4. *What is meant by the Catholick Church, and what by a particular Church?*

Anſ. *The Church is Catholick or Univerſal, as conſiſting of Believers of all Nations, Jews and Gentiles, and it is One Body, whereof all particular Churches are but Parts and Members.*

Queſt. 5. *How is this Catholick Church of Chriſt viſible, and how is it inviſible?*

Anſ. *This Catholick Church is partly viſible, conſiſting of them that outwardly profeſs Chriſt and Faith and obedience to his Goſpel, and partly inviſible, conſiſting of them that are ſincere in that Profeſſion, known to God alone. All the glorious things ſpoken of the Church in Scripture belong primarily and principally to the Church inviſible, and to the viſible Church by Analogy and Participation.*

Queſt.

Queſt. 6. *How may a True, Sound and Orthodox viſible particular Church unto which a Chriſtian ſafely may and in duty is bound to joyn himſelf, as being a ſound Member of the Catholick Church of Chriſt (which is the One Body) be known from a falſe Church from which he ought to ſeparate?*

Anſ. *Two of* Bellarmine's *Notes of a true Church are firſt briefly confuted*, viz. *the Name of Catholick, which is firſt moſt ridiculouſly appropriated by the Romaniſts to themſelves (whereas the Catholick Church is but One all the World over) and then argued from, for that Church being the only true Church alike ridiculouſly, and the Union of all Churches to that of* Rome, *and to the Pope as of Members to their Head; whereas that Church is at beſt but a Siſter-Church, and not the Mother of all other Churches, and no Primitive or Apoſtolical Church was ever taught a neceſſity of Union to, or dependance upon* Rome *or the Biſhop of* Rome.

But the right Notes or Marks of a true and orthodox Church are contained in the 19th Article of our Church's Doctrine, viz. *the Word of God truly taught, and the Holy Sacraments rightly adminiſtred, in all things eſſentially requiſite to the ſame, and where theſe are, there is a true and orthodox Church, and there is no true Church without them. The Church of* England *is ſuch a true Church, to which all Chriſtians living in it may ſafely, and in duty ought to joyn themſelves. The Adverſaries of this Church (oppoſite to each other, yet agreeing and uniting to oppoſe it) are by theſe Notes falſe Churches: As for the Church eſtabliſhed in* England, *it is the ſame with that*

of

of the Bleſſed Martyrs, and it is like to formed Churches; ſo that whoſoever from it, muſt upon the ſame Ground from them both.

Queſt. 7. *Of what Church is a Man Member in his Baptiſm? Is it of the C tholick, or is it only of that particula wherein he lives?*

Anſ. *Men are in Baptiſm made M the Catholick or Univerſal Church, wh One Body all the World over, and is fou One Covenant, and not of any particula reſtrictively.*

Queſt. 8. *With what Church is it a C Duty as a Church-member to hold Con Is it with the whole Catholick Church ſome particular Church only?*

Anſ. *Whereas Independency in its ve tution makes Church-memberſhip of, and communion with their particular Churc It is certain on the contrary, that Churc nion and the Exerciſes of Church-comm late primarily, as Church-memberſhip d Church Catholick, although of neceſſity p in ſome particular Church, for Chriſt Members of the Catholick Church, and memberſhip is in nature and time antece Church-communion and the Acts and U thereof, and no Man hath right to Chu munion or to its Exerciſes but a Church-M So that Acts of Communion are no Acts of wion when they are performed by one tha and doth not own himſelf to be a Church but only communicates with a Church for reſt or to ſerve a turn.*

Our common Prayers far excel Extempore Prayers in the Conventicles for the Catholick Spirit and Charity in them. Objections against mixt Communions are vain, seeing Christians communicate with the whole Catholick Church, and all Church members, whether good or bad, whether absent or present; so that if the company of wicked Men defile the Defilement will be unavoidable. To confine Communion to a particular Church as Independents do, is Schism.

Quest. 9. *Are not all Christians in duty bound to communicate, and to maintain Communion in special with that particular Church wherein they live, and have their constant abode, supposing it a true and orthodox Part of the Catholick Church?*

Ans. *Holding Communion with the Catholick Church doth not leave Men at large, but from Christians Obligation to hold Communion with the Catholick Church, ariseth an Obligation to communicate with that particular Church where they live, being a sound and orthodox Part of the Catholick Church; for we can no other way hold Communion with the Catholick Church but must become Schismaticks.*

The true Notion of Schism is a Separation from the Catholick Church, which is made by any ones separating from that sound and orthodox Part of the Catholick Church in which he lives.

Quest. 10. *Who are they that have a just claim to joyn in the Religious Exercises of Church-communion, as their Right and Privilege.*

Ans. *All baptized Persons have a rightful claim to Church-communion and the Religious Exercises thereof as Church-members till they renounce it, or till they forfeit it by a scandalous* Life. The

The Church being but one in all places, he that hath right to Church-communion and to Church-privileges in one particular Church, hath the ſame Right in all other particular orthodox Churches; and he that is juſtly excommunicate out of one, is ſo out of all; ſo that no orthodox Church may receive into Communion them that are excommunicated out of another.

Queſt. 11. *Is it not the unqueſtioned Duty of all Church-members, whoſe privilege it is to challenge that Right and Title to Church-communion, to exerciſe all publick Acts of Church Communion in the particular Church wherein they live?*

Anſ. *As it is the Privilege, ſo is it the Duty of all Church-members to communicate with that particular Church they live in, in Religious Exerciſes, for they muſt do the part of Church-members, that is, of Chriſtians, the excommunicated Perſon's Duty only excepted, and what that is, but not communicating with the Church in Holy Offices and Exerciſes.*

1. *Men do what lies in them to make Chriſt's Church that it ſhall not be viſible.*

2. *They do not do what all Members of any civil Society are bound to do in that Society of which they are Members.*

3. *If Chriſtians were not obliged to an external, actual Church-communion, Chriſt might have inſtituted Church Offices and Church Officers in vain.*

4. *In vain did he then give Authority to thoſe Officers to bind and looſe, that is, to admit into, and caſt out of the Church's Communion.*

5. *Without it God's Publick Worſhip cannot be ſecured. They that neglect to joyn in God's Ordi-*

nances and in Acts of Church-communion, do what lies in them, that God's Worſhip ſhall fail; and whereas ſome will ſay, that they could like to communicate with the Apoſtles as the Primitive Chriſtians did; it is made plain that ſuch irreligious People as refuſe to joyn with the preſent Biſhops and Miniſters in Church-communion, would no more joyn with the Apoſtles themſelves, if they were, and if they officiated in Perſon among them.

6. Without ſuch Obligation of holding Communion with the Catholick Church in that particular orthodox part thereof in which Chriſtians live, no Church-order can be maintained; and as God is the Author of Order and not of Confuſion, ſo this Order did the Apoſtles or Apoſtolical Men ſettle in the Churches which they planted and ſettled, viz. a particular Paſtor, and a particular People to be mutually related one to another, and to joyn together in Church communion.

7. The Scripture Notion of Separation being a withdrawing from publick Aſſemblies, or refuſing to communicate with them, proves it to be a Chriſtian's Duty to reſort to them, for if it be a Sin to withdraw from, then muſt it be a Duty to reſort to Church Aſſemblies, and ſo doth the Scripture-Notion of holding Fellowſhip and Communion.

A Church ſtate giving Men Right to Church-communion will be in vain, and the means of Grace will be in vain if not made uſe of, by Mens reſorting to Religious Aſſemblies.

They that reſort not to Religious Church-Aſſemblies excommunicate themſelves and ſo forfeit that Right; nay, and a multitude of Men being ſo irreligious, provokes God to remove his Candleſtick,

which

which is the ſoreſt Judgment that can come upon a People. The danger and miſery of Popery returning amongſt us by God's Judgment for Mens general contempt of the Holy Ordinances they enjoy in this Reformed Church.

Queſt. 12. *What Churches are they that may be truly called Separate Churches?*

Anſ. *Thoſe that are of a different Communion from that of an eſtabliſhed, ſound and orthodox Part of the Catholick Church, and all Perſons are Schiſmaticks and Separatiſts that joyn to, or communicate with any Church of a different Communion from it.*

Three Rules of Catholick Unity, ſhewing which are Churches of different Communions that cannot be Members of each other.

1. *One Biſhop, and ſo one Church in one City. Hereby the Ancients preſerved ſeveral Aſſemblies in the ſame City, in the ſame Communion,* viz. *by their being all under the Government of one and the ſame Biſhop.*

Thoſe then muſt be Separate Churches that diſown the Government of the proper Biſhop of the City and the Region belonging to it, and that ſet up Antibiſhops, or Schiſmatical Presbyters, not ſubject to, but oppoſing his Authority.

2. *Meetings of Perſons that forſake the Eſtabliſhed Church and its ſolemn Aſſemblies, out of diſlike of its Doctrine, or Worſhip, or Government, cannot be Members of the Eſtabliſhed Church, and conſequently are Separate Churches.*

2. A Member of any particular Church that is Orthodox, is a Member of the Catholick Church, and consequently of all other particular Churches, and a Fellow-member of all Christians in them, and consequently that Church is a separate Church which will not own another Churches Members as her own.

The Independent Churches therefore are separate Churches, for no Man can be a Member of them, though he be a Member of the Catholick and of the National Church, by being baptized; no, nor is the Member of one Independent Church a Member of another Independent Church, so that they are Separatists and Schismaticks from one another as well as from the Churches Catholick and National.

The Presbyterians also, forming themselves into distinct Bodies and Societies under distinct Governours, and not yielding obedience to those of the Established Church, nay, condemning its constitution, and endeavouring its subversion, can in no good sense be one Church with, or Members of the Established Church, and so are separate Churches.

Quest. 13. *May not a good Christian safely suspend his Communion with the particular Church he lives in, or is it not best for him to do so, because of the woful Divisions therein?*

Ans. *After a brief reflection upon some Persons total suspension of Church-communion, resorting to no Religious Assemblies at all, it is shewed, that Divisions in the Church can be no better reason for suspending all Communion with any Church, than it is for Mens being of no Religion at all, because there are so many Religions in the World. It is pos-*

ſible, and therefore it is neceſſary for any one to diſcern which is the true and orthodox Church, and then, the rule is, prove all things, hold faſt that which is good.

There were Church-diviſions in the Apoſtles times as well as now, and if Church-diviſions can excuſe from Church communion, then never was Church-communion a duty, nor ever will be, for never was the Church free from Diviſions, nor ever will.

There is a plain Rule for ſettling the well meaning Country mans thoughts amidſt theſe Diviſions, and that is, to conſider whether the Church he lives in, being Eſtabliſhed by lawful Authority, have any ſinful thing in its Communion; and if he can find no ſuch, to hold cloſe Communion with it, and avoid all ſeparate Churches, becauſe the advantage lies ever on the ſide of lawful Authority.

Queſt. 14. *Can nothing leſs than ſome ſinful Terms of Communion, impoſed in the Eſtabliſhed Church, juſtifie Mens ſeparating from it, or from its Stated Solemn Aſſemblies?*

Anſ. *It is a Chriſtians indiſpenſable Duty to communicate with the Eſtabliſhed Church in her Aſſemblies for Peace and Unities ſake, unleſs he cannot do it without Sin: if it were otherwiſe, there might be no end of Diviſions and Subdiviſions.*

Queſt. 15. *Are they then in duty bound to communicate conſtantly with the Church of* England *who are its natural Members, that know of no ſinful thing required of them in holding in its Communion, and in token thereof actually communicate with it without ſcruple when they pleaſe?*

Anſ.

Anſ. *They are in duty bound to it. Whether Men look upon themſelves as Members of the Catholick Church, or of the particular Church they live in; their Church-communion muſt be as fix'd and conſtant as is their Church-membership; and he that is not a fix'd Member, and holds not a fix'd Communion with the one, neither is he a fix'd Member of the other, nor holds he a fix'd Communion with the other, and whoſoever divides from the one divides from the other.*

The only Queſtion to be put in this caſe is, Is the Eſtabliſhed Church a ſound and orthodox Church, or is it not?

The faults found in it by different Perſons, viz. *a few Ceremonies, or our Common-prayers, or our Forms of Prayer, briefly wiped off. If a Man ſeparate from one Church for any thing hitherto alledged againſt it, he muſt upon the ſame account ſeparate from the Primitive Churches, from the Holy Martyrs and from all the Reformed Churches.*

As for them who have communicated, and ſtill do by times communicate with our Church without ſcruple, they muſt be without excuſe in going from it, or not communicating conſtantly with it, and are ſelf-condemned; for if they do it at all, Why not conſtantly? Both Separation and Communion are either Duties or Sins. Nothing can Juſtifie Mens not doing that always which they can do ſometimes. Happy is the Man that condemns not himſelf in that which he alloweth.

Queſt. 16. *May not any good Chriſtian lawfully communicate with diſtinct ſeparate Churches or Meetings, who yet is minded to hold Communion with the Eſtabliſhed Church for the main?*

Anſ. *Not if he will walk by either Scripture-Precept or Preſident, or by true Reaſon, or by the true Rules of Catholick-unity and Church-communion. The Presbyterians ſcandalous changeableneſs herein, ſome of them making it now a part of a Catholick-ſpirit to do ſo, that is, to communicate freely with all parties, which implies it to be a ſort of Schiſm to refuſe Communion with any Schiſmatical Brotherhood.*

This is contrary to the Scriptures, being a halting betwixt God *and* Baal, *a wavering, a double-mindedneſs and a ſerving of two contrary Maſters, contrary to the true Principles of Catholick-unity and Church-communion; as for Example, To the true Notion of Church-memberſhip as to a particular Church: To the connexion betwixt Church-memberſhip and Church-communion, ſince Church-communion belongs to a Church-member, and is a conſequent of Church-memberſhip: To true Reaſon, the true caſe betwixt the Eſtabliſhed Church and Separate Churches, ſhewing that they both cannot be in the right, ſo that unconſtant Communicants muſt of neceſſity ſin in one of the Communions. It makes Men Members of two oppoſite Bodies, and contrary to themſelves, and ſo Schiſmaticks in one or other of the Communions, and it is inconſiſtent with that near Relation that is betwixt a Miniſter and his People. The concluſion is, If Schiſm be no ſin, then let Men go on in this courſe, but if it be indeed a damnable ſin, then let them beware.*

Queſt. 17. *May not Men go to Separate Meetings in hopes of having purer Ordinances, or Ordinances more purely adminiſtred than they can have*

them

:m in the Church of Englands publick Aſſem-
es ?
Anſ. No purer Ordinances can be deſired than thoſe Chriſt's own Inſtitution, and them without any mix-re of human Inventions, and thoſe are to be had in e Church of England's Aſſemblies.
When all is ſaid, the Vertue and Efficacy of Divine dinances is to be aſcribed to their Inſtitutions and God's Bleſſings, and they who aſcribe it to this or that de of Adminiſtration are in danger of Superſtition.
Queſt. 18. May not Men go where they think they n edifie beſt? Why may not Men go to Separate eetings for better Edification ?
Anſ. The Peace and Unity of the Church is of too eat value to hang on ſo looſe a Principle or Rule as is, for Men to go whither they think good, for better lifying opens a door to endleſs Diviſions.
The true Scripture-notion of Edification relates pri-arily to the Church as an Houſe or Building, and can-t be had by Diviſions and Separations, for they ſhake nd pull down, but cannot build up. Unity, Love and harity are proper to edifie; as for particular Chriſtian's lifying, they muſt be ſubordinate to, and ruled by the hurches edifying.
Four Inſtances of Chriſtian's edifying in the Scrip-ures, in Knowledge, in Godlineſs, in ſtrong Reſoluti-ns, with fervent Affections to all Goodneſs, and in com-rt, ſo as to be quit of all Dbouts. And in two Words, l Man is truly edified when he becomes either wiſer or etter, and increaſeth in all Vertue and Grace as well s in Knowledge, not in Knowledge only, as they under-and it commonly who pretend to edifie beſt in Sepa-ate Meetings.
There is no reaſon for any ones hopes to be better dified in any of theſe Inſtances in Separate Meetings han in the Churches: as for the ſeparate Teachers, hey do not truly preach to Peoples Edification more than he Church's Miniſters.

But

But be they (ſuppoſe) the moſt excellent Preachers, yet Mens edifying depends not on the Preacher's Gifts or Excellencies, but the Co-operation of God's Spirit and his Bleſſing, of which there is no promiſe in the way of Schiſm or Separation, or otherwiſe than in the Churches Unity and Communion.

As for the People, it is not really true that they edifiebetter in any of thoſe inſtances in any of the ſeparate Meetings, but they uſually find another, even the worſt ſort of edifying by it. The Edification of particular Chriſtians relates to the Churches edifying, and therefore muſt be in its Unity. Indeed God ſets the greateſt value on his Churches edifying in Unity, even more than any private Chriſtians improvements. No edifying like that in Charity, and Schiſm is the higheſt breach of Charity.

And yet, ſuppoſe a better edifying in Separate Meetings, yet is this none of thoſe reaſons that warrant a Separation, and no Man can without ſin break out of the Church's Unity for better edifying. For,

1. *It is as much the fundamental Law of Chriſt's Church as of all other Societies, that the publick good be preferred before any particular Chriſtian's private advantage, and therefore all means of Edification muſt give way, and be ſubordinate to the Peace and Unity of the Church.*

2. *Such as go to Separate Meetings for better edifying, muſt of neceſſity fall under the heavy guilt of Schiſm.*

3. *This courſe of forſaking the Church for better edifying, is in the Church as ſinful and as fooliſh as Sedition or Rebellion for redreſſing Grievances is in the ſtate.*

4. *It perverts all means of Edification, and fruſtrates God's end in them all; for they are in God's intentions to keep out Schiſm, and to be ſubſervient to the Church's Peace and Unity. All Church Officers are to deſign and endeavour this. Miniſters are both Church-members, and alſo Joynts to unite and compact all the Parts of*

the

v, ſo that one Miniſter's Gifts excelling anothers by no means occaſion Diviſions or Separations; the People, for them to go whether they fanſie n edifie moſt, perverts thoſe means God gives.

t. 19. *Doth that communicating with the Eſta- Church, which profeſſed Separatiſts who have ft it, and have fixed themſelves in a Separate , perform when it may ſerve a turn, to qualifie or ſome gainful, honourable, or authoritative r Office in the State, which of late ſome call nal-communion, come up to, or anſwer any of the ules or Meaſures of Catholick-unity or Church- nion?*

. Such communicating of them that are fix'd rs of a Separate Meeting is a bare-faced Hypo- nd a groſs Abuſe of the Church The very ſtating ſe ſhews this. Beſides,

The diſtinction of Conſtant and Occaſional-commu- ts explained) is perfectly Novel, unknown to the ive Fathers or Churches

It accords with no ſound Rule of Catholick-unity rch-communion, as appears in ſeveral inſtances, ularly, Occaſional-communion muſt be as abſurd peak of Occaſional-memberſhip.

The Diſtinction hath no Foundation in, no Warrant he Holy Scriptures, but is contrary to them. They o liberty to hold Occaſional-communion with that h with which Men are not ſatisfied to communi- nſtantly.

Who ſo do it are ſelf-condemned, for either they not communicating conſtantly, or they ſin in com- ating ſo much as occaſionally.

v many of the common Peoples practiſing this Di- on, though they know it not, occaſions the next ion.

Queſt.

Queſt. 20. *Can thoſe Perſons be thought to do, as they ought as Church-members, and as to the maintaining of Catholick-unity and Church-communion, who go to the Church and alſo to Separate Meetings indifferently and promiſcuouſly as ſome accidental occaſion prompts them?*

Anſ. *In no wiſe as the caſe is put, no not neither when they go more conſtantly to the Church, and only ſometimes to the Meeting, who yet will be loth to be accounted other than Members of the Church of* England.

This will be ſtill more plain by the Anſwer to the next Queſtion.

Queſt. 21. *What is to be thought of two diſtinct Churches in the ſame Place or Pariſh? May not good Chriſtians living where they are, communicate lawfully ſometimes with the one, while he communicates conſtantly with the other, either as he hath occaſion to draw him to either of them, or as he affects the one better than the other?*

Anſ. *The only ſinleſs Occaſional communicating is that with another Orthodox Church, where a Man is by his occaſion or by accident: But for two diſtinct Churches in one place, they are oppoſite Churches and oppoſite Bodies, and if a Man go conſtantly to the one, and occaſionally to the other, or ſometimes to the other, he muſt be guilty either of Schiſm, or at leaſt of abetting of, and partaking with Schiſm in the one of them.*

A Conſtant Communion is doubtleſs every Chriſtian's Duty with the Orthodox Church he lives in.

But to obviate ſome Objections follow two other Queſtions.

Queſt. 22. *Is there no good ſenſe wherein a Chriſtian may be ſaid to be a Member of a particular Church, conſidered as diſtinct from other particular Churches, and what is that ſenſe?*

Anſ. *A* baptized Perſon, or *a Chriſtian being primarily a Member of the* Catholick Church, *is a Mem-*

ber

ber of the particular Church he lives in, as distinct from other particular Churches, as he is under its immediate Government, and yet still he communicates (wherever he is) as a Member of the Catholick Church, whether it be in his own National, or in a Foreign Church, and every Act of Communion that he performs, is an Act of Catholick communion with the whole Church all the World over, and with all Christians in it.

A National and a Diocesan Church briefly explained.

Quest. 22. *Is there no good sense wherein a Christian may be said to communicate with another particular Church Occasionally, being no Member of it, and what sense is it?*

Ans. *A Man may in a good sense communicate Occasionally with another particular National Church whither providence brings him, or by accident in another Parish, neither of which have any appearance of Schism, nor is the same case with a Mans Occasional communicating with an Established Church, the Communion whereof he scruples, and being a professed Member of a Separate Church.*

The case of Mens going to other Parishes, when it is allowable, when sinful stated.

A proper good Effect of this Discourse, with several sorts of Persons, desired.

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THE END.

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